

PATTERNS OF POWER · BRANDENBURG-PRUSSIA

Brandenburg-Prussia

The Complete Study · 1230 — 1640 — 1918 — 1945

Thomas J. Bryan

with Claude (Anthropic) · 2026

held as tested, not revealed

Preface and Outline

Front matter · how this study was made, the disciplines it holds itself to, and a map of its thirteen parts

The collaboration

This is a case study in the Patterns of Power series, applying the series' framework to the Hohenzollern order in Brandenburg and Prussia — from the crusade that took the Baltic country whose name the state eventually wore, through the accession of the Great Elector in 1640 and the two centuries of construction that followed, to the fall of the monarchy in 1918 and the destruction of the settlement it had been built around in 1945. The framework is a lens for reading how any order of power is founded, dressed and held: the floor of force beneath every order; the robe of doctrine laid over the floor to make the force cheap; the settlement that divides the spoils among the armed; the formation that installs in a child, before he can refuse it, the map of whom to defer to and whom to believe without checking; the cost column in which each subject prices defection; the seam through which the belief the whole depends on is managed; the default by which an elite coordinates without instruction, each man defending the arrangement by defending himself; and, running through all of it, position logic — the proposition that rulers in like positions converge on like solutions because a position poses a problem with only a few good answers.

Brandenburg-Prussia was chosen for four reasons, and the first is the strongest.

It is the original of the model the preceding study watched being copied. Meiji Japan chose Prussia deliberately: a constitution preserving the monarch's prerogative, a bureaucracy insulated from parties, and an army whose command ran to the throne rather than through a minister. Reading the original after the copy allows one question no other pairing in this collection can ask — when a state adopts a foreign model, which of the pathologies that follow were imported with it, and which were produced by the adopter's own materials? The answer this study returns is that the insulation travelled and the ballast did not, and that a design exported out of the position that generated it keeps its pathologies and loses its justifications.

It is position logic in unusually stark form. A scatter of sandy, thinly populated territories with no natural frontier and no defensible position, whose ruler's lands were separated by other men's, one of them held as a fief from a foreign king, all of them

fought across for a generation and emptied of a third to a half of their people. Every structural consideration says such a thing should have been partitioned, as Poland — larger, older, richer — actually was. It was not. What it did instead is the subject of this study, and the answer it reached was not a national peculiarity but a convergence.

Its liberty variable is documented and explicit. Two franchises operated in one state, granted and withheld by the same men within twenty years: a direct, equal and secret manhood suffrage for the imperial parliament, and an indirect, unequal, publicly cast ballot for the Prussian chamber, which retained its weighting by tax payment until 1918. That is a laboratory instance of where protections come from and what makes them more than words, and the study spends its sharpest attention there and on the arrangement's internal coordination.

And it is founded on a broken apparatus rather than an intact one, which is the exact inverse of the case before it. The collection had a founding on a working machine and needed the opposite; the Great Elector inherited a wreck. What emerged is counterintuitive and is one of the study's contributions: the wreck made the founding easier rather than harder, because there were no creditors of the previous order to pay, no incumbent coordination to capture, and a nobility whose privileges cost nothing to confirm.

The study was built the way the series is built, one module at a time. The author brought the framework, the direction and the judgement of the whole, and held the collaboration to its disciplines; Claude, Anthropic's model, did the research — verifying load-bearing quotations, dates and figures by search against sources reproducing the primary text before any module was written — and produced the drafts, applying the framework module by module, each presented and confirmed before the next was begun. A seed written by an earlier Claude supplied a starting spine and was wrong in several particulars; where the research contradicted it, or contradicted the framework's own expectation, the research was followed. The framework is scaffolding and a lens, not a cage, and several of this study's better findings are corrections to what it had predicted.

The disciplines

The method of information asymmetry. The study's engine throughout is the exact public words set beside the exact private ones. The Great Elector's sealed promise of 1653 that he would conclude nothing of importance without his estates' counsel, beside the paper he wrote for his son in 1667 telling him that the more diets he held the more authority would be taken from him — and then burned the draft. The recess granting a villager the right of appeal, beside the clause of the same article sending him

to the tower if the appeal fails. The famous grant of press freedom in June 1740, beside the minister's letter recording that its purpose was to leave foreign envoys no grounds for complaint. The arithmetic is laid out and the sum left to the reader. The conclusion is not preached.

Quotation. Public-domain primary sources — laws, recesses, edicts, charters, treaties, testaments, marginal notes, constitutional articles — are quoted exactly, in the original, with a translation, at the length the argument needs. Old English, Latin, seventeenth-century chancery German and eighteenth-century French are reproduced in their own orthography. The translations are the collaboration's own and are deliberately literal. Modern copyrighted scholarship is paraphrased, briefly, and credited.

No fabrication. No quotation, date, attribution or figure is invented or reconstructed from memory. What could not be verified is dropped or flagged, never guessed, and this study drops a good deal: a much-quoted royal pronouncement on coffee, a celebrated line about the sale of Brandenburg, a remark on rural schooling, and a famous sentence on the motives for the Silesian invasion are all absent, and each absence is explained where a reader would expect to meet it. Contested figures are given as ranges, and where no range could be settled the gap is admitted rather than filled.

Gravity without partisanship. Suffering is held with gravity, and the study refuses both flattery and demonisation. Its watchword is that legibility is not pardon: to understand how a thing was done is not to forgive its being done. Equally, naming an origin as built is not a debunking — a thing that was constructed and then became real is more durable than a lie, and the people who defended the orders described here were not dupes.

Contribution. Every module returns a refinement to the framework, stated plainly in its closing section, rather than merely applying the framework to the case.

Held as tested, not revealed. The pattern is treated as something discovered and tested against the evidence, not handed down as doctrine — a tendency, never a law, corrected wherever the record refuses it.

What the study returned

Stated compactly, and argued in the modules: that the succession rule for wealth predicts whether a conquered order contains an office a stranger can enter, since a society that consumes each man's estate at his funeral cannot grow one; that a settlement instrument may be a prospectus addressed to settlers who have not yet arrived, its generosity measuring competition rather than mercy; that a labour regime and the conquest whose ground it stands on are separate events with separate causes,

routinely centuries apart; that a feudal service commuted to cash in the same generation as a salaried officer corps is created is one transaction and not two, being the disarming of a class and its re-employment on the sovereign's terms; that a settlement's boundary marker may be a thing rather than a person, which makes it cheap to defend by conveyancing rule and cheap to destroy by a rule about the same thing; that where an apex cannot convert a population it captures the certification of its interpreters, the diagnostic being a residence requirement in a law about appointments; that an incumbent creed containing an unbound authority-variable can be inherited by any later order at no doctrinal cost; that legitimacy can be minted rather than borrowed exactly where the issuer controls the formation of the audience that must honour it; that formation is never withheld, only a cast is, so the question is never whether a population was formed but whether anyone like it appears in the cast; that the frequency of force measures the failure of the benefit column rather than the strength of the cost column; that two extractors bidding for one body produce something the body experiences as a right, which ends the moment their interests agree; that a subject whose principal benefit is a function of his principal disability is held more tightly than fear could hold him; that exit which does not remit is real exit, and its function for the state is selection rather than revenue; that the terms on which an arrangement is dissolved price it more honestly than the terms on which it ran; that a tax privilege's geography maps the geography of the founding bargain, and that a privilege abolished in principle survives as a rate; that an indirect tax which protects its substitute is a redirection instrument and the owner of the substitute is whose revenue is being defended; that an order finds its extraction ceiling from its own prosecution statistics, and a rate reduction is the admission; that an unexpected domestic freedom may be an instrument for ceasing to answer to somebody else; that competent suppression aims at format and channel rather than at persons, and that suppression which is not total is a funnel whose spout the suppressor chooses; that a promise made to a market is enforceable where a promise made to subjects is not; that insulation installed against a rival ends by protecting the insulated component from its owner; that a co-optation whose consideration has stopped paying may be repaired by legislated subsidy, the distribution being the tell; that a rights catalogue must be read for what it does to combination rather than for what it grants the individual, and that a suspension list is the most candid clause in a constitution; that a general principle stated in a lost factional fight survives unattached and is picked up by whoever next finds it useful; that the width of a franchise means nothing until the competence of the body it elects is established; that a counter-revolution's timing reports on the state of the elite and not of the streets; that the ruled set the price and the hierarchy chooses what to sell, and

sells the most visible and least structural thing it owns; that an insulated component with its own instrument of force does not fall with the apex but changes customers; that the coordination which creates a metabolic debt also services it, so the catastrophe comes when it stops rather than when it runs; that administrative killing is found inside a working apparatus, in the districts it did not reach; that where a state is too poor to run parallel institutions its civil achievements are carried on its coercive apparatus and are not detachable from it; and that a design exported out of the position that generated it keeps its pathologies and loses its justifications.

The arc

A landscape opening and twelve modules, each with a framework function and its own evocative title.

Landscape — the ground before the Elector. *A King in Every Stronghold.* A trader's report from 890 describing a country with a king in every fortress and great strife among them; a funeral rite that consumed a dead man's whole estate so that nothing could accumulate and no office could grow; the crusade that took fifty-three years because there was nothing to capture; and the finding that the manor which later fed the army was built three centuries after the conquest usually blamed for it.

1 — The Floor of Force. *A Lord of No Consideration.* What a standing army was actually traded for in 1653, priced against what each side already held; the public article promising the estates would be consulted, beside the private paper explaining why they never would be; and the treaty rather than the battle that fixed the date the floor became transferable.

2 — The Settlement. *Forty Thaler for a Horse.* The edict of January 1717 that bought out the nobility's ancient obligation to ride, and the school founded eight months later that took their sons at twelve; and the discovery that power over other human beings ran not with a bloodline but with a registered parcel of land.

3 — The Robe. *To Populate the Land.* Four stories told to four audiences that never compared notes; a Calvinist house that captured the training of a Lutheran clergy rather than converting it; a crown bought with eight thousand men and conferred by its wearer on himself; and a doctrine of toleration whose operative clause names its purpose.

4 — Formation. *Quiet, Faithful, Obedient, Peaceable.* Four populations formed into four incompatible casts of authority; a catechism written in 1529 whose central term was a variable the state could simply become the value of; and a poor administration's discovery that it need only license the man standing in front of the child.

5 — **The Cost Column.** *One Third of the Arable.* Five different common men and five different ledgers; the unfreedom that bought a conscript nine months a year at home; a company that sold twenty thousand Africans and was liquidated for seven thousand ducats and twelve people; and the price the villager was charged when the arrangement was finally dissolved.

6 — **Extraction.** *Thirty-Five Thousand Hides.* Three revenue streams and the single office that held all three; the survey that found the land the nobility had kept off the books; the men who owed cash and collected labour; and where the whole of it went, in the conqueror's own accounting.

7 — **Information and Suppression.** *So That Foreign Ministers Cannot Complain.* A press freedom granted as a diplomatic instrument; a censorship law that measured danger in printer's sheets and stated in its own text that it aimed at writings and never at persons; and the one external check this state could not shake off, because it had written the covenant itself to reassure its creditors.

8 — **Elite Coordination and the Default.** *The Ministers Bear No Responsibility.* What a single estate owner was standing on and why every plank of it was also part of the floor; the group that could have broken the arrangement and voted instead to ratify it; and the fence built round the army to keep it from a parliament, which ended by keeping it from everyone.

9 — **Plurality or Foreclosure.** *Petitions Under a Common Name.* Where Prussian protections actually came from; why every one of them was granted to the individual and withheld from the combination; a revolution's electoral law picked off the shelf eighteen years later by the man who had helped crush it; and what makes a paper right operative.

10 — **Change and Collapse.** *It No Longer Stands Behind Your Majesty.* A rising that walked into an intact floor and found no battle to fight; a general who told an emperor the army was no longer his and sold its services to the republic the next morning; and the twenty-seven years between the fall of the monarch and the destruction of the men the monarchy had been built around.

11 — **The Grim Accounting.** *Two Hundred and Thirty-Five Thousand Eight Hundred and Six.* The metabolic note called twice by armies rather than by soil; a debt repaid in imported people; the famine the army's own magazines absorbed; and the province where the machinery worked and the people starved anyway.

12 — **Convergence and Divergence.** *Finance, War and Domains.* What this order shares with places it never heard of; what travelled when it was copied and what stayed behind; and the strongest case for the defence, stated in full and answered — that the

achievements and the costs were one apparatus described twice, because the state was too poor to have two.

A KING IN EVERY STRONGHOLD

The ground beneath the Hohenzollern state — three conquests laid one upon another between the ninth century and 1640, the order that had no seat a stranger could sit in, and the finding that the manor which later fed the army was built three centuries after the conquest usually blamed for it

Why this ground has to be read from so far back

The subject of this study is the Hohenzollern state — the scattered, sandy, indefensible collection of territories that a twenty-year-old inherited in December 1640, and what he and his successors made of it. But that state was not built on neutral ground. It was built on a settlement already four centuries old, in a country whose name belonged to a people who had been conquered, in a march whose own Slavic inhabitants had been conquered before that, by men whose ancestors had themselves been conquered and forcibly converted at the point of a Frankish sword four hundred years earlier still. No conqueror in this record ever met an aboriginal condition. Each of them met the naturalised residue of somebody else's earlier build.

That is not a rhetorical layering, and it is not a way of saying that everything is conquest and therefore nothing matters. It is a working requirement, because a conqueror's options are set almost entirely by what he finds — by whether the order in front of him has pooled its coordination into something a stranger can enter and operate, or has kept it dispersed among many hands that a stranger can only fight one at a time. That single question decides whether a conquest is cheap or ruinous, brief or generational, and whether the resulting order runs on other people's earned authority or has to manufacture its own. So the first task of this study is to establish, from the sources, what was actually standing on the south-eastern Baltic shore and on the sandy plain west of the Oder before the men with crosses on their cloaks arrived — and to establish it without the flattery that treats a pagan people as timeless and innocent, and without the condescension that treats them as scenery.

Three builds have to be reconstructed, and they are separate. The first is the Baltic order of the Old Prussians, from whom the state eventually took its name and whose language it eventually extinguished. The second is the Latin Christendom that came for them — itself a former conquest, naturalised until it was simply the shape of the world, and by the twelfth century exporting its surplus armed sons outward in every

direction it could reach. The third is the March of Brandenburg, a wholly separate conquest of a wholly separate people, which arrived in Hohenzollern hands in 1415 by a transaction that had nothing to do with Prussia at all. Only in 1618 did the second and third come into a single pair of hands, and only in 1640 did a ruler take them over who would do anything remarkable with them.

There is one more thing to establish here, and it is the finding that most surprised the research. The image the whole subject carries — a martial aristocracy living above a mass of labour bound to the soil, in the manner of Spartans above helots — is a real structure and it really did stand on this ground. But it was not built by the conquest. The conquest of the 1230s to the 1280s was followed by two and a half centuries in which the cultivator east of the Elbe was, by the standards of western Europe, unusually free and unusually well-supplied with bargaining leverage. The binding came afterwards, in the sixteenth century, from a grain price and a legislature; and the legal instruments that did it were passed by an assembly of noblemen bargaining with a cash-poor prince, in a country with too few workers rather than too many. Where an order's labour regime came from is a separate question from where its floor of force came from, and reading the second off the first — which is what the Spartan image invites — gets the causes wrong and therefore gets the later politics wrong. The landscape has to carry that correction, because everything the study does afterwards depends on it.

Landscape I — The sea road to Truso

The earliest reliable account of the country later called Prussia was written down at the court of Alfred of Wessex, some three and a half centuries before the crusade, by a trader who had actually been there. He is called Wulfstan, and his report was inserted into the Old English version of Orosius. He sailed from Hedeby to Truso, a market on Lake Družno near the Vistula delta, in seven days and nights under continuous sail, and what he described when he arrived is a genuinely foreign order, described by a man with no religious quarrel to prosecute and no conquest to justify.

The first sentence is the one this whole study turns on:

Ðæt Estland is swýðe mycel, and þær bið swýðe manig burh, and on ælcere byrig bið cýning.

That land of the Ests is very large, and there are very many strongholds, and in each stronghold there is a king.

And a few lines further:

Sē cyning and þā rīcostan men drincað mýran meolc, and þā unspēdigan and þā þēowan drincað medo. Ðær bið swýðe mycel gewinn betwēonan him.

The king and the richest men drink mares' milk, and the poor and the slaves drink mead. There is very great strife among them.

Two facts sit in those two sentences, and neither can be got round. The society had ranks — kings, rich men, poor men, slaves — so it was not an egalitarian idyll and there was already unfree labour in it before any Christian arrived. And it had no apex. Many strongholds, a king in each, and habitual war among them: the coordination of this world had never pooled. There was no throne, no treasury, no chancery, no assessment roll, no man or office through which the obedience of the whole country could be commanded. Wulfstan is describing, in one clause, the condition that would later cost the Teutonic Order fifty-three years and two general risings, because there was nothing to capture. A conqueror facing a single seat can win once and then administer; a conqueror facing a king in every stronghold has to win everywhere, and then hold everywhere, and has no earned obedience to rent while he does it.

Wulfstan then describes something stranger, and it is the most analytically loaded passage in the whole landscape. When a man dies among the Ests, the corpse lies unburnt in the house among his kinsmen for a month, sometimes two; kings and other high-ranking men lie longer in proportion to their wealth, sometimes half a year — and the Ests, he says, have among them a tribe who can make cold, so that the dead lie so long and do not rot. All that while there is drinking and games in the house. Then, on the day of the burning, what remains of the dead man's property after the drinking and the games is divided into five or six parts or more, and laid out along the road at intervals of up to a mile from the settlement, the largest portion furthest out and the smallest nearest the house. And then:

Donne sceolon bēon gesamnode ealle ðā menn ðe swyftiste hors habbað on þēm lande... Donne ærnað hý ealle tōweard þēm fēo: ðonne cymeð sē man sē þæt swyftoste hors hafað tō þēm ārestan dæle and tō þēm mæstan... And þonne rīdeð ælc hys weges mid ðēm fēo, and hyt mōtan habban eall; and for ðý þær bēoð þā swifstan hors ungefōge dýre.

Then all the men in the land who have the swiftest horses are assembled... Then they all race towards the goods: and the man who has the swiftest horse comes to the first and largest portion... And then each rides his way with the goods, and may keep it all; and for that reason swift horses are exceedingly dear there.

Read past the strangeness and look at what the custom does. A man's estate is consumed at his funeral — spent on the wake, and what survives the wake is carried off

by whoever owns the fastest horse in the district, who need not be a kinsman at all. Nothing descends. Wealth does not compound across generations; it is dismantled every time its holder dies. Wulfstan says so explicitly in the next line — they spend nearly all a dead man's substance on the long lying-in and on what is laid along the roads for strangers to race for.

This is the upstream fact that explains the missing apex. An office is an inheritable position; a lineage of rulers is an inheritable position; a treasury is accumulated wealth that outlives the man who accumulated it. A society that liquidates every estate at every death has made all three structurally impossible, and it will therefore keep producing exactly what Wulfstan saw — many strongholds, a king in each, great strife among them — no matter how wealthy the amber trade makes it. What looks like a picturesque funeral rite is in fact a levelling engine, and where such an engine runs, no conqueror will find a chair.

The groves and the springs

Two centuries later a churchman at Bremen, writing between about 1073 and 1076 with the missionary reports of his own archdiocese in front of him, described the same coast. Adam of Bremen was not disinterested — his subject was the extension of his see — but what he wrote about the Sembi, the Prussians of the Samland peninsula, is unusual precisely because it cuts against his own brief:

Hanc inhabitant Sembi vel Pruzzi, homines humanissimi, qui obviam tendunt his ad auxiliandum, qui periclitantur in mari vel qui a pyratis infestantur. Aurum et argentum pro minimo ducunt... Multa possent dici ex illis populis laudabilia in moribus, si haberent solam fidem Christi, cuius praedicatores immaniter persecuntur.

This land is inhabited by the Sembi or Prussians, most humane men, who go out to the aid of those in peril at sea or set upon by pirates. They reckon gold and silver of very little account... Many praiseworthy things could be said of these peoples' morals, if only they had the faith of Christ, whose preachers they savagely persecute.

They reckoned gold and silver of very little account — the same fact Wulfstan had reported from the other end, that this was a society that did not hoard. They traded furs of astonishing value, Adam adds sourly, for the woollen cloth his own world thought worthless, and the appetite for their marten skins had poisoned Christendom with the venom of pride. And then the sentence that contains the whole future of the country:

Usque hodie profecto inter illos, cum cetera omnia sint communia nostris, solus prohibetur accessus lucorum et fontium, quos autumant pollui christianorum accessu.

To this day indeed among them, though everything else is shared with our people, only access to their groves and springs is forbidden, which they hold to be polluted by the approach of Christians.

Everything else was open. Trade, hospitality, rescue at sea, marriage, residence — all shared. One thing was withheld: the sacred grove. And the conquest, when it came, was declared over precisely that withheld thing, and over nothing else. The two failed missions the Latin record remembers were killed at that boundary: Adalbert, bishop of Prague, martyred in 997, whom Adam names; and Bruno of Querfurt, killed in 1009. It is worth holding both halves of this at once. The Prussians were not being asked to give up their trade or their land or their tribute; they were being asked to give up the one thing they had refused to share. And the men asking were not cynics, which is the point of the next section.

Landscape II — Where the cross came from

The Latin Christendom that came for the groves was itself a conquest that had taken. This is not an aside; it is the single most useful fact for reading the crusaders' sincerity correctly, and it can be dated from documents rather than asserted.

Around 782 or 785 — the dating is contested, and a case has been made for as late as the 790s — Charlemagne issued the capitulary for the Saxon lands. It is a short, ferocious text, and two of its clauses are relevant here:

Si quis corpus defuncti hominis secundum ritum paganorum flamma consumi fecerit et ossa eius ad cinerem redierit, capite punietur.

If anyone shall cause the body of a dead man to be consumed by flame according to the rite of the pagans, and shall reduce his bones to ash, let him be punished with death.

Si quis deinceps in gente Saxonorum inter eos latens non baptizatus se abscondere voluerit et ad baptismum venire contempserit paganusque permanere voluerit, morte moriatur.

If anyone henceforth among the people of the Saxons, lurking among them unbaptised, shall wish to hide himself and shall scorn to come to baptism and shall wish to remain a pagan, let him die the death.

Four hundred and sixty-odd years later, the treaty imposed on the Prussians at Christburg would forbid them the burning of their dead in almost the same terms. The

men imposing it were Saxons and Rhinelanders and Franconians — the descendants, in many cases quite literally, of the people the first clause was written against. In four and a half centuries a creed installed by capital punishment had become the furniture of reality for the descendants of those it was installed upon, so completely that they carried it outward as self-evident truth and died for it in a country their great-grandfathers had never heard of. That is a measurement, not a metaphor: it tells us roughly how long a violently installed formation takes to become genuine conviction in the line of the conquered, and the answer, in this one traceable case, is something under half a millennium.

It also disposes of the lazy reading of the crusaders as hypocrites. They were not. The knight who came north for a season's campaigning in the swamps of Pomesania believed what he had been taught by the priests who taught his father, and the fact that his ancestors had been taught it at swordpoint was invisible to him and would have meant nothing if it had not been. Naming a belief's constructed origin is not debunking it. A thing that was built and then became real is more durable than a lie could ever be, and considerably more dangerous.

What Christendom had in the twelfth century, besides the conviction, was a surplus. Its inheritance customs concentrated estates on eldest sons and manufactured, every generation, a class of armed, trained, ambitious men with no land, and the outlets for that surplus were the great fact of the age: Iberia, the Levant, and — closer, cheaper and available to men who could not afford a voyage to Syria — the pagan north-east. The institutional form the outlet took on this frontier was the crusading vow extended to a target that had nothing to do with Jerusalem. In March 1147, at the Frankfurt assembly, Bernard of Clairvaux wrote to the princes and bishops of the empire urging the campaign against the Wends, and the phrase that has embarrassed his admirers ever since names the terms exactly:

...donec auxiliante Domino aut ritus ipse aut natio deleatur.

...until, with the Lord's help, either their rite itself or their nation be blotted out.

Convert or be destroyed, as a published war aim, addressed not to the Wends but to the German nobility whose younger sons were being invited to come and get it done. Note whom the sentence is written for. It is not an ultimatum delivered to the pagans; they would never read it. It is a recruiting document aimed at the men who would fund and fill the expedition. That asymmetry — the story cut for the people who supply the soldiers rather than the people the soldiers are sent against — is the shape the whole northern enterprise would keep, and it will recur in this study in forms that have nothing to do with religion.

Landscape III — The conquest that had to build everything

The bull and the invitation

Konrad, Piast duke of Masovia, had been fighting the Prussians on his northern border for two decades and losing. Around 1226 he offered the Teutonic Order — a hospital brotherhood founded at Acre in 1190, turned military order, and recently expelled from Hungary for behaving in Transylvania exactly as it would shortly behave in Prussia — the use of the Kulmerland as a base. Hermann von Salza, the Order's grand master, had learned the Hungarian lesson and would not move without written imperial title. What he obtained is dated at Rimini in March 1226, though a strong scholarly case holds that the surviving instrument was drawn up around 1234–35 and backdated. It grants the Order the land of Prussia, and it grants it with the powers of an imperial prince: tolls, markets, coinage, the appointment of judges, jurisdiction. The operative logic sits in the recital, which explains why the emperor could give away a country he had never held — *terra ipsa sub monarchia imperii*, the land itself lying under the monarchy of the empire — and in the observation, made in the emperor's own voice, that many others had been begged to take on this business and had given up just when they seemed about to set out.

Two further instruments followed: an agreement with Konrad said to have been made at Kruszwica in June 1230, which survives only in later references and which nineteenth-century scholarship judged to be an Order forgery; and Gregory IX's bull of 1234, *Pietati proximum*, taking Prussia into the ownership of St Peter and granting it to the Order to hold in perpetuity, answerable to no secular or ecclesiastical superior but Rome. Three documents, two of them of contested authenticity, all issued before the conquest they authorise, each granting a thing the grantor did not possess to a grantee who did not yet hold it. This is what a title looks like when it is manufactured in advance of the fact, and it is worth noticing that the Order wanted it in writing badly enough to keep going back for more.

Fifty-three years

The Order crossed the Vistula in 1230–31 and built at Thorn; Kulm followed in 1232, Marienwerder, Elbing in 1237. The Order of Dobrzyń was absorbed in 1235, the Livonian Brothers of the Sword in 1237. By 1241 five of the seven principal Prussian groupings had submitted. Then came the first general rising, 1242–49, in alliance with Świętopełk of Pomerelia, which reduced the Order at its lowest point to a handful of castles. Then, after the Lithuanians and Samogitians destroyed a combined crusading

army at Durbe on 13 July 1260, the great rising of 1260–74, which took fourteen years to put down. Sudovia, the last of the Prussian lands, was subdued in 1283. From the first crossing to the last submission: fifty-three years, against a population with no state, no fortification technology to match the brick castle, and no ally that lasted.

That arithmetic is the direct consequence of the thing Wulfstan noticed in 890. There was no seat to take. Every stronghold had to be reduced, every land subdued separately, and each submission bought nothing outside the land that made it — which is exactly why the risings were general and why they came twice. A conqueror who takes a throne can be obeyed by everyone who obeyed the throne. A conqueror who takes a country of kings must beat each of them, and then discover that beating them has not created any authority he can inherit, because none of them had any authority beyond their own walls to lose.

Christburg, 1249: what the conquered were offered

On 2 February 1249, with a papal legate signing in the name of the Prussians because the pope considered himself their suzerain, the Order concluded peace at Christburg. It survives complete, which makes it the single richest document of this landscape, and it repays reading as what it is — a settlement instrument stating the price of submission.

The converts were guaranteed personal rights of a substantial kind. They could inherit, acquire and exchange movable and immovable property; land could be bequeathed not only to sons, as had been the custom, but to daughters and other kin; they could sue and be sued in secular and ecclesiastical courts; they could enter the priesthood or a monastery, and those of noble birth might in principle be received as brother knights of the Order itself. Sales of land were restricted to persons of the same nation and the Order took a cut — a clause aimed at stopping a seller converting his farm into cash and absconding to the enemy. The prominence of the property clauses is itself evidence: one does not draft at length against violations that are not occurring.

Against that, the price. Thirteen churches in Pomesania, six in Warmia, three in Natangia, to be built and endowed with land and livestock within half a year, and to be handsome enough that the pagans would rather pray in them than in the woods. An annual tithe in grain. Military service on the Order's campaigns, armed at their own cost and provisioned at their own cost. No alliances against the Knights. One wife, married in church; no purchase or sale of women in marriage; no marrying a stepmother, a sister-in-law, or the widow of a kinsman within four degrees. No offerings to Curche, whom the treaty names as the god of the harvest. No cremation of

the dead with horses, retainers, arms or goods. And a clause that names the interpreters the conquest most needed gone:

Promiserunt eciam, quod inter se non habebunt de cetero Tulissones vel Ligaschones, homines videlicet mendacissimos histriones...

They promised also that they would no longer have among them Tulissones or Ligaschones, that is to say, men who are most lying mummers...

The treaty goes on to describe what these men did: at the funerals of the dead they praised the deceased for his thefts and plunder and rapine and other sins committed in life, and, raising their eyes to heaven, declared falsely that they saw the dead man riding through the middle of the sky, armed and mounted. Whatever they actually were — the philology is disputed and the treaty is the only source that names them — their function is legible. They were the men who told the community what had become of its dead, and were believed. Nobody who has run an order needs the significance of that explained. The cremation clause and the Tulissones clause are the same clause twice: they abolish the funeral, because the funeral was where this society's authority over meaning was exercised, and — as Wulfstan's horse race shows — where its property was redistributed as well. Take the funeral and you have taken both the interpreter and the inheritance rule in one motion.

The peace held for less than a year. In November 1249 the Prussians destroyed a body of knights at Krücken and killed the survivors who had surrendered, which fixed their reputation in the Latin chronicles for the next three centuries. Fighting ran on to 1253, and the great rising followed within a decade. The treaty was superseded and survives as a document rather than as a settlement — but as a document it tells us, more precisely than any chronicle, what the conquest was actually for and what it was prepared to concede.

Kulm, 1233: a charter written for people who had not yet arrived

Six weeks before Christmas of the second year of the invasion, on 28 December 1233, Hermann von Salza, the land-master Hermann Balk and the Order's convent issued the charter for Kulm and Thorn. It is the founding constitutional instrument of the whole Order state, and it is the one that repays the closest structural reading, because of who it was addressed to.

Its terms were, by the standards of the Order's legal position, generous. Magdeburg law; free election of judges; Kulm itself as the court of appeal for the family of towns that would follow; hereditary and saleable tenure with succession guaranteed to

daughters as well as sons; freedom from unjust exactions; a share for the burghers in hunting, fishing and milling. The Order reserved the regalian monopolies — the lakes, the ores, the salt, the gold and silver, the amber — and it reserved military service. The original burnt in 1244 when Świętopełk sacked Kulm; the renewed version of 1251, on which our knowledge substantially rests, adjusted several points in the Order's favour, which is itself worth noting.

Now the structural point. Land settlements normally reach for one of three fictions about what was there before: that the ground was empty, that the grantee already owned what he is being handed, or that a collective holding was always divisible into individual shares. The Kulm charter reaches for none of them, because it is not making a claim about the past at all. It is an advertisement. It states the terms on which a stranger who has never seen the Vistula may come and hold land under the Order, and it was drafted before there was anybody to hold it. The Order's problem was not that a native population stood in the way of a settler population it already had; its problem was that it had a country and no people, and had to recruit them out of Westphalia and Lower Saxony and Holland and the Rhineland in competition with every other lord in eastern Europe doing exactly the same thing in exactly the same decades.

That is the fourth fiction, and its diagnostic is the reverse of the others: where the first three are generous to the conqueror and brutal to the incumbent, this one is generous to the recipient, because the recipient can go somewhere else. The terms of a prospectus-settlement measure the strength of the competition for settlers, not the weakness of the natives. And it has a consequence that runs through the next three centuries of this ground: the men who came out to the Ordensland came on hereditary tenures, with courts they helped choose, at fixed rents, with the right to sell. Whatever else was true of the east, the cultivator who arrived in the thirteenth century arrived free, and knew it, and had it in writing.

The conquered did not get the same instrument. The Order's law distinguished those who had submitted from those who had rebelled, and the second group was reduced. What the Christburg treaty shows, though, is that the first group was offered a real place — property, inheritance, courts, the priesthood, and, for the well-born, the possibility of the white mantle — and was in return required to ride on the Order's campaigns armed at its own expense, which is precisely the obligation a lord imposes on a class he intends to keep as fighting men rather than as labour. The Prussian free class that resulted supplied light cavalry to the Order for generations. Their descendants were absorbed; their language died out around the beginning of the eighteenth century, its last speakers carried off in the famine and plague that swept East Prussia between 1709 and 1711. The name survived them by rather longer.

Landscape IV — The other conquest, and how a Franconian bought it

Brandenburg has to be reconstructed separately, because until 1618 it had nothing to do with Prussia beyond a shared frontier ideology, and because it was a conquest of a different people by different men for different reasons.

The land between the Elbe and the Oder was Slavic. The Hevelli held the Havel country from the fortress of Brenna; the Sprewane held the Spree. German kings had been raiding and briefly taking Brenna since Henry the Fowler in 928–29, and losing it again. What changed in the twelfth century was the crusading vow, extended to this frontier by the same appeal of Bernard's quoted above, and the arrival of a lord who understood that the way to hold a country was to populate it.

Albert the Bear, of the house of Ascania, took part in the Wendish campaign of 1147, but his decisive instrument was not the sword. It was a christening and a will. He cultivated Pribislav-Henry, the baptised Hevelli prince at Brenna, who stood godfather to Albert's eldest son and gave the boy the Zauche district as a christening gift, and who — having no son of his own — arranged that the Ascanians should succeed him. Pribislav-Henry died in 1150 and Albert took possession. The arrangement was then contested by Jaxa of Köpenick, a Sprewane prince with a claim of his own and Polish backing, who held the fortress until Albert besieged and stormed it, taking Brenna on 11 June 1157. In a charter of 3 October that year Albert styled himself, for the first time, *Adelbertus Dei gratia marchio in Brandenborch* — Albert, by the grace of God, margrave in Brandenburg.

Look at the sequence, because it is a pattern this collection keeps meeting. The claim was manufactured first, by godparenthood and inheritance treaty, so that the taking could be described as a succession. Then the taking was performed by siege. Then the title was assumed in a document. The grant dressed as a confirmation is the cheapest form of settlement there is, and the reason is that a man who believes he inherited a thing does not believe he can be deprived of it. Albert's heirs would spend the following century and a half doing the second and much larger half of the work — bringing in Flemish, Dutch, Rhenish and Harz settlers by the thousand under locators who laid out villages on German law with fixed dues and hereditary tenures, draining the Havel marshes, founding towns, and endowing bishoprics. The Slavic population was in part displaced, in part absorbed, and in the end simply outnumbered. Under the Ascanians, and for the same reason as in the Ordensland, the peasant who came east came free.

Two later facts complete this landscape and both are load-bearing. First, in 1356 the Golden Bull fixed the constitution of the empire and named the Margrave of Brandenburg one of the seven electors of the King of the Romans, with the office of arch-chamberlain, and bound the electoral territories to descend undivided by primogeniture. Whatever Brandenburg was as a piece of ground — sandy, thinly peopled, poor — it was thereafter a vote, and it was a vote that could not be split among heirs. That is the single most valuable asset in this landscape, and it is a legal asset rather than a material one.

Second, the Ascanian line died out in 1320, and the vote fell to absentee Wittelsbachs and then to Luxembourgs who treated the March as a purse. The record of the following century is of pledged towns, plundered traders, feuding castellans and a countryside nobody was governing. King Sigismund, needing money and needing a friendly vote in the electoral college, took a loan of a hundred thousand gulden from Frederick VI, Burgrave of Nuremberg, in July 1411 against Brandenburg as security, and made him governor. At the Council of Constance on 30 April 1415 he made the arrangement permanent for a total of four hundred thousand Hungarian gulden: the margraviate, the electoral dignity and the arch-chamberlaincy, to Frederick and his heirs. The estates of Brandenburg met in October 1415 and asked him to rule from Berlin. The formal enfeoffment followed at Constance on 18 April 1417.

So the house that would eventually give its name to the modern German state acquired its principal European asset not by conquest, marriage, inheritance or election, but by lending an emperor money he could not repay and taking a distressed property in settlement — and then spending years reducing the noble families of the March by siege before the property produced anything. The Hohenzollerns arrived in the north-east as creditors with an army, in a country whose conquest somebody else had performed two and a half centuries earlier.

Landscape V — The manor was built late

Here the standard picture has to be corrected, because getting the date wrong makes the whole subsequent politics unreadable.

The Order state peaked and then broke. Its army was destroyed by the Poles and Lithuanians at Tannenberg in 1410; its towns and its own vassal gentry, taxed and excluded from government, formed the Prussian Confederation in 1440 and in 1454 appealed to the King of Poland; the Thirteen Years' War that followed ended at the Second Peace of Thorn in 1466 with the western half of the country ceded to Poland outright and the eastern remnant held by the Order as a Polish fief. In 1525, on Luther's explicit advice, the last grand master — Albrecht of Hohenzollern, of the

Franconian line, a cousin of the Brandenburg electors — dissolved his own order in Prussia, converted, and by the Treaty of Kraków of 8 April took the country back as a secular hereditary duchy. On 10 April, in the market square of Kraków, he knelt to Sigismund I and received the banner of Prussia with a crown about the eagle's neck as the mark of vassalage. It was the first state in Europe to make Lutheranism its establishment, and it was a Polish fief, and it would remain one for a hundred and thirty-two years.

Through all of that political wreckage the agrarian order east of the Elbe was moving in a direction the political history does not explain. Two forces did the moving. The first was demographic: the plagues of the fourteenth century and the wars of the fifteenth left deserted farms across the region, and a lord with empty land and no hands to work it is in a weak bargaining position, not a strong one. The second was commercial: from the later fifteenth century the Baltic grain trade through Danzig to the Low Countries turned rye into an export commodity with a rising price, and a nobleman who had previously drawn rents from tenants now had a reason to farm on his own account, at scale, for the market. To do that he needed labour he could command rather than labour he had to hire in competition with every other lord in a country short of people.

He got it, and he got it by legislation. The instruments were passed by territorial diets in which the nobility bargained its consent to taxation against the prince's consent to its demands over the rural population — restrictions on the peasant's freedom to depart, control over the labour services of subjects and their children, and permission to buy out peasant holdings and absorb them into the demesne. In Brandenburg the key instruments were the territorial recesses of 1540 and 1572; we can date them precisely because the great recess of 1653, when it permitted the buying-out of peasant farms, grounded that permission expressly on them — *vermöge des Landes-Reversus de Ao. 1540. und 1572.* — and required that the peasant be paid in cash at valuation. The same recess also insisted that a refractory subject could be expelled only *cum causae cognitione*, on formal inquisition and after judgment, which is a phrase worth filing away.

The sequence, then, runs: conquest 1230–1283; free hereditary tenures for three centuries; grain boom from about 1500; binding legislated from the 1530s to the 1570s; consolidated in the seventeenth century. Between the conquest and the manor lie roughly two hundred and fifty years, and the manor's causes are a price series and a bargain in a diet, not a crusade.

Two further corrections belong here, both owed to modern scholarship. William Hagen's work on the Brandenburg villages argues that the label of a "second serfdom"

misdescribes the region, since there had never been a first — the east had been settled on colonial free tenures, not on medieval manorial servitude — and that the villagers who emerged from the sixteenth century, though bound by an accumulation of individual obligations, retained substantial property rights, went to law constantly, and were very far from the passive figures of the older literature; Edgar Melton's comparative work makes a similar case against the standard model. This is not an exoneration. The obligations were real, they were heavy, they fell on people who had not agreed to them, and in some districts the labour services were crushing. But it changes what one is looking at: not a caste of helots taken in war, but a population of colonists whose descendants were legislated downward, over generations, by an assembly of their landlords with a sovereign's signature on it.

And here is the difference from the Spartan image that matters most for everything the study does afterwards. The helot had no court above his master; the Brandenburg villager did. He could sue, and he did sue, and the court he sued in belonged to the prince. Whatever the nobility bought in 1540 and 1572 and would buy again later, it never bought the abolition of the sovereign's jurisdiction — and that surviving jurisdiction is a hand inside the manor which a later prince, wanting soldiers and taxes and finding both locked inside the estates, will have every reason to use. The instrument by which a ruler eventually gets back into an arrangement he has sold is very often the one clause the buyers did not think worth the price of removing.

Landscape VI — What was standing in 1640

In 1613 the Elector John Sigismund converted to the Reformed confession, putting a Calvinist dynasty at the head of a population and a nobility that were overwhelmingly Lutheran and had no intention of following him; the estates forced him to limit the consequences almost at once. In 1614, by the Treaty of Xanten, the house took Cleves, Mark and Ravensberg on the lower Rhine, four hundred miles west of Berlin with other men's territory in between. In 1618, on the death without sons of Albert Frederick, the Duchy of Prussia fell to the Brandenburg line, and the two conquests — the Order's on the Baltic, the Ascanians' on the Havel — were held for the first time in one pair of hands, though they touched at no point and one of them was a fief of the Polish crown.

In the same year the war began. Brandenburg attempted neutrality, changed sides more than once, and was fought across by imperial and Swedish armies for a generation. The demographic estimates are contested and should be given as a range: something between a third and a half of the population of the March is the usual figure, with individual districts and towns far worse. Berlin was a wreck. The

countryside had gone back to scrub in places where the villages had been burnt out and the survivors had walked away.

That is what Frederick William inherited in December 1640: three separated territories, no defensible frontier anywhere, a vassal duchy on the Vistula held from a foreign king, a Calvinist prince over Lutheran estates, a nobility that had spent a century acquiring legal control of the rural population and paid no tax on its own land, towns ruined, and a population halved. He was twenty years old and he had, on the most generous accounting, a few thousand men under arms.

The framework holds that structural change begins with an elite fracture, an exhaustion, a conquest or a surplus of claimants — and that the metabolic ledger records not the change of rulers but the disruption of coordination itself. This landscape hands the study something the collection has not previously had in this form: an order founded on a coordination that had already collapsed, in a country where the note had already been called before the founding began. Everything the Hohenzollerns built, they built on ground that had been cleared for them by a catastrophe nobody in the family had arranged.

Reading the Prussian ground against the framework

Four things this landscape contributes, and one it confirms.

The succession rule for wealth predicts whether there will be a chair. The framework's sharpest early question about a conquered order is whether its coordination has pooled into an office a stranger can enter, and it uses administrative complexity as a proxy. This case supplies the variable that sits upstream of both. The Old Prussians ran a wealth-destruction rite: an estate was consumed at its owner's funeral and what survived the wake was laid along the road and carried off by whoever owned the fastest horse. Where nothing descends, nothing accumulates; where nothing accumulates, there is no treasury, no lineage of rulers and no office, because an office is by definition an inheritable position. The visible symptom — a king in every stronghold and great strife among them — is downstream of the funeral. So the question to ask early of any order about to be conquered is not only whether it has an apex, but **what happens to a dead man's property**: a society with a strong inheritance rule is building the thing a conqueror can capture, and a society that dismantles estates at every death is, without intending it, immunised against being captured cheaply. The Order paid fifty-three years and two general risings for that immunity.

A fourth settlement fiction: the prospectus. The three fictions the framework names — vacancy, recognition, divisibility — are all claims about the status of the land before the grant, and all of them are generous to the conqueror. The Kulm charter of

1233 is none of them. It makes no claim about the past at all, because it is addressed to people who have not yet arrived: it is a recruiting instrument, stating the terms on which a stranger may come from Westphalia or Holland and hold land here. Its diagnostic is inverted — generosity to the recipient rather than to the grantor — and the variable it measures is the strength of the competition for settlers rather than the weakness of the incumbents. Reach for this one where the conqueror wants the ground, cannot or will not use the native population to work it, and does not have a settler population in hand. And expect its long consequence, which is that the population the conqueror imports arrives with written liberties and knows it.

A conquest and the labour regime later standing on its ground are separate events with separate causes. This is the correction the research forced and it is the module's central finding. The martial elite over bound rural labour is genuinely there in this landscape, and it genuinely rhymes with Sparta. But it was not made by the crusade. The crusade's own settlement gave hereditary, saleable, court-protected tenures, to incomers and — at Christburg, to those who submitted — to a good many of the conquered as well; the binding came two and a half centuries later, driven by an export price for rye and enacted by diets in which noblemen traded taxes for control of the countryside, in a country with too few workers rather than too many. Reading the manor off the conquest, which the Spartan image invites, misattributes it to war when it was made by a market and a legislature, and therefore misreads every later fight about it. The general rule: **date the labour regime independently of the founding, because the two are routinely centuries apart and the second is far more often legislated than conquered.**

And where the Spartan rhyme breaks, it breaks on a court. The helot had no jurisdiction above his master. The Brandenburg villager had one, used it, and kept it through every recess — the sovereign's courts, and the requirement even in the nobility's own great settlement that expulsion proceed only on formal cause shown. That surviving jurisdiction is the seam through which a later prince, needing what is locked inside the estates, can reach. When an elite buys a population from a sovereign, the clause it neglects to buy is the one the sovereign will come back through.

Confirmed, six centuries early: the robe is cut for whoever supplies the men. The collection's colonial cases find a legitimating story addressed not to the conquered but to the metropole that funds and mans the conquest. Bernard's letter of 1147 is that document in its pure form — a war aim published to the German princes and bishops, whose younger sons were the resource being mobilised, and never in any sense addressed to the Wends. So too the imperial and papal charters, drafted for an audience in Italy about a country none of them had seen. The pattern is not a property of

modern empire or of European peoples. It appears wherever the men who hold the ground and the men who pay for holding it live in different places, and it appeared here in the twelfth century in a form the nineteenth would recognise instantly.

One thing this landscape refuses to do is read forward. The men in it were solving the problems in front of them with the materials they had: a duke who could not hold his border, a grand master who would not move without title, a margrave who wanted a country and needed farmers, a nobleman with empty fields and a rising rye price, an emperor who needed cash and a vote. None of them was building toward anything, and the state that eventually stood here was not the plan of any of them. What they left behind was a set of materials — a name, a vote that could not be divided, a nobility with legal hold of the countryside and no tax on its land, a population that had been halved, and a ruined treasury — and the study proper begins with the man who had to work out what could be done with them.

A note on sources. The primary quotations here are given exactly and are in the public domain. Wulfstan's account of the Ests is from the Old English *Orosius*, composed at or near the court of Alfred and describing a voyage of about 880–890; the text quoted follows the version printed in Bright's *Anglo-Saxon Reader*, and the translations are my own and deliberately literal. Adam of Bremen's description of the Sembi is from Book IV of the *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*, written between about 1073 and 1076. The clauses on cremation and on refusal of baptism are from the *Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae*, capitula VII and VIII, in Boretius's edition for the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*; its date is disputed between 782, 785 and later, and I have given the range rather than choosing. Bernard of Clairvaux's phrase on the Wends is from Epistola 457, of March 1147; I quote the single clause that is universally reproduced and have not attempted the surrounding text. The Treaty of Christburg of 2 February 1249 survives complete; the Latin of the *Tulissones vel Ligaschones* clause is quoted from the reproductions of the treaty text, and readers should know that the manuscript readings and the printed transcriptions vary in orthography. Albert the Bear's style *marchio in Brandenborch* is from his charter of 3 October 1157.

The Golden Bull of Rimini is quoted only through the phrases whose Latin is securely attested; its dating is contested, Tomasz Jasiński having argued that the surviving instrument was issued in 1235 and backdated, and I have said so rather than presenting March 1226 as settled. The Treaty of Kruszwica of 1230 survives only in later references and was judged a forgery by Max Perlbach; I have flagged that too. The Kulm charter's original was destroyed in 1244 and our knowledge rests on the renewal of 1251 and later copies, which differ; the terms given here are those on which the

versions agree. The clause of the Brandenburg recess of 1653 citing the *Landes-Reversus* of 1540 and 1572 is quoted from the text reproduced in *German History in Documents and Images*.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited rather than quoted. The revision of the "second serfdom" model for Brandenburg is William Hagen's, in *Ordinary Prussians* (2002), with a converging argument from Edgar Melton; both hold that the east had no first serfdom to be second to, that the villagers retained real property rights and were highly litigious, and that the older picture of a crushed and passive rural population does not survive the estate records. I have taken the correction and not the exoneration. Contested figures are given as ranges: Brandenburg's losses in the Thirty Years' War are usually put between a third and a half of the population, with much higher figures for particular districts, and the estimates rest on fragmentary parish material; the proportion of the Old Prussian population killed in the first century of the conquest is likewise given in the literature at around half, and should be treated as an order of magnitude rather than a measurement. The dating of the extinction of the Old Prussian language to the years around 1700, with the famine and plague of 1709–11 carrying off the last speakers, is the standard view and rests on the absence of later attestation rather than on any positive record of a last speaker. Where I could not verify a wording — including a much-quoted dramatisation of Sigismund's sale of Brandenburg, which derives from a nineteenth-century narrative rather than from a document — I have left it out.

A limitation to state plainly at the outset of this study: the sources for this ground are overwhelmingly Latin and German, and the Polish, Lithuanian and Baltic scholarship on the conquest is substantial and reaches different conclusions on several points, particularly on the Order's conduct and on the demography. I have used what was accessible in translation and flagged the disagreements where I met them, but a reader should know that a study of this subject built from German-language material alone reproduces the field of vision of one of the parties, and that risk is not fully retired here.

A LORD OF NO CONSIDERATION

The floor of force: what the standing army was built out of, what it was actually traded for in 1653, and the treaty rather than the battle that fixed the date it could be handed on

The position, December 1640

A twenty-year-old who has been living in the Netherlands and then in Königsberg, four hundred miles from the capital of the territory he has just inherited, succeeds to three separated countries in the twenty-third year of a war. Brandenburg is fought across and garrisoned by other people's armies. The Duchy of Prussia is a fief he holds from the King of Poland, and he has to go to Warsaw and do homage for it before he can be certain of it. The western counties on the Rhine are unreachable. The troops nominally his own are sworn to the Emperor, quartered in his own fortresses, and commanded by men who took their instructions from his father's favourite. Berlin, at the end of the war, would count something like six thousand people.

What Frederick William did first is the most revealing act of his reign, and it was not a build. He discharged the Brandenburg troops in imperial service, made an armistice with Sweden in 1641, and went briefly to almost nothing. This looks like weakness and was in fact the recognition of an arithmetic: soldiers who have sworn to somebody else are not an army, they are a foreign garrison being fed at your expense, and there is no point in the expense. Twenty-six years later, writing privately for his heir, he named the principle and confessed the mistake of having ever doubted it:

Alliancen seindt zwahr gutt, aber eigene krefte noch besser, darauff kan man Sich sicherer verlassen, vndt ist ein herr in keiner consideration, wan er selber nicht mittell vndt volck hatt, den das hatt mich, von der zeitt das Ichs also gehalten, Gott sey gedanck[t] considerabell gemacht, vndt beklage alleze[i]tt das Ich im anfangе meiner Regirung, zu meinem hochsten nachtheill mich dauon ableitten lassen, vndt wider meinen willen, anderer Rath gefolget.

Alliances are indeed good, but forces of one's own better still; on those one may rely more safely, and a lord is of no consideration if he does not himself have means and men — for that, from the time I so held it, has, God be thanked, made me considerable; and I always lament that at the beginning of my reign, to my highest disadvantage, I let myself be drawn away from it and against my will followed the counsel of others.

The line is usually quoted for its swagger. Read as a position statement it is something drier: an inventory of what a ruler is when he has no floor. He is *in keiner consideration* — not consulted, not counted, a man whose signature on a treaty does not oblige anyone because nothing follows from it. The Elector of Brandenburg was excluded from the negotiations that mattered at Westphalia and got Farther Pomerania while Sweden kept the western half with Stettin and the mouth of the Oder, which is to say he was compensated in the currency reserved for people who cannot enforce anything. He drew the correct inference.

The rebuilding began around 1644 and the figures are reported variously — a few thousand in the earliest years, perhaps eight thousand by the later 1640s, drawn largely from mercenary recruitment on the ordinary market and paid for by loans, subsidies and whatever the provinces could be induced to grant. Nothing in this is unusual. Every prince in Germany was doing some version of it. What distinguishes this case is not the building of the army but the question of what the army was paid for with, and to whom, and what the seller thought he was selling.

The bargain of 1653, read from the document rather than the legend

On 26 July 1653 the Elector and the assembled estates of the Mark — prelates, lords, knights and towns — concluded the recess that the older literature calls the founding charter of Prussian absolutism. It is a long instrument of some seventy-odd articles and it is worth reading in full precisely because the legend has flattened it. The standard summary runs: the nobility voted the money for a standing army and received in exchange the right to fasten serfdom on their villagers, thereby signing away their own future. Every clause of that sentence needs testing against the text.

Start with the money, because it is where the legend is weakest. The copy printed in Mylius's collection leaves the sum blank — *sich gegen Unß getrewlichst undt gehorsambst zu* — — — *Thalern... erbohten* — and the figure supplied by the historians is 530,000 thaler, at twenty-four groschen the thaler, in good money, payable over six and a half years. That is on the order of eighty thousand a year. By the end of the reign the military establishment is reported to have cost about a million and a half thaler annually, something like half of all state expenditure. Whatever the estates of Brandenburg bought in 1653, they did not buy an army; they contributed roughly one year of an army's cost, spread over six.

Now the other side of the ledger, which is longer and more revealing. Article 20 confirms to the prelates, nobility and town councils the *privilegium primae instantiae*

— first-instance jurisdiction over their own subjects, with cases to be remitted to the immediate authority and not lifted casually to the Elector's courts. Article 31 secures the descent of noble fiefs, taking brothers and brothers' children into joint tenure and confirming that noble fiefs, when sold, pass to noble purchasers. Article 52 exempts the nobility from the tolls, allowing them to export their own grain and rent-corn, wine, cattle and wool by land and water and bring back their purchased victuals free of duty — the privilege that made the export estate profitable, restated as a right of long standing. Article 62 does the same for salt. Articles 1 to 10 protect the Lutheran confession against the Calvinist dynasty, with the striking disclaimer that the Elector never intended to arrogate to himself *die Herrschafft über die Gewissen*, lordship over consciences. Article 11 settles the indigenat, preferring natives to offices. Article 14 promises that the Elector will conclude nothing of importance and enter no alliance without the estates' knowledge and counsel.

And Article 22, which is the one worth reading slowly, because two things are done in it that appear to be opposites.

The first is the confirmation of the manorial order in terms that leave nothing to inference:

Die Leibeigenschaft thuet deren Orthen, da sie introduciret undt gebräuchlich, allerdinge verbleiben. Würde Jemand dowieder posiessionem oder præscriptionem libertatis opponiren, wird dazu nicht alleine diuturnitas temporis, sondern auch bona fides, titulus, vel scientia & patientia Domini requiriret werden.

Bondage shall remain in every respect in those places where it has been introduced and is customary. Should anyone plead against it possession or prescription of liberty, there shall be required not only length of time but also good faith, a title, or the knowledge and sufferance of the lord.

The burden of proving freedom falls on the man claiming it, and length of undisturbed liberty alone will not discharge it. The same article confirms the buying-out of peasant holdings on the authority of the earlier territorial instruments of 1540 and 1572, requiring only that the peasant be paid in cash at valuation, and permits the relegation of a refractory subject — but only *cum causae cognitione*, upon formal inquisition and after judgment, and only within the bounds of the particular jurisdiction; banishment from the whole country requires the Elector's own consent and ratification, and the Elector reserves the right to moderate any sentence.

The second thing is stranger and it is done first, before the bondage clause. The article opens with the nobility's own complaint — that they are constantly being sued by their peasants at court and put to expense — and provides the remedy:

Wo ein Baur seine Herrschafft gegen hoffe beklagen, und seine Klage nicht gnugsamb ausführen würde, soll Er vermöge Unserer Cammergerichts reformation, mit dem Thurne gestraffet werden, damit andere sich dergleichen muthwilligen Klagens enthalten.

Where a peasant shall complain of his lordship at court, and shall not sufficiently make out his complaint, he shall, by virtue of Our Chamber Court's reformation, be punished with the tower, so that others may refrain from suchlike wanton complaining.

Read those two clauses together with Article 20, which grants the aggrieved not only the *beneficium appellacionis* but the *beneficium nullitatis*, and the shape of the thing becomes clear. The Elector did not abolish the villager's access to his courts. He confirmed it, and then priced it. A peasant may appeal; a peasant who appeals and loses goes to the tower. This is not a contradiction and it is not hypocrisy. It is a valve. It keeps the sovereign's standing as the final judge alive — which is the whole basis of the claim that the manorial jurisdiction is a delegation rather than a possession — while holding the caseload down to what a small chancery can carry, and it does so at the villager's risk rather than the Elector's cost. The nobility got the first instance. The Elector kept the last, and made sure it would be used sparingly.

The volume of complaint is itself the evidence that this was a live problem rather than a formality. A right nobody exercised would not need a deterrent clause drafted at the request of the people being sued.

What was actually sold, and by whom to whom

The seed of this study guessed that the founding transaction here was a purchase from the very class being subordinated, paid for in other people. That is half right and the half that is wrong is the important half.

Take the nobility's side of the exchange item by item and ask what was new. First-instance jurisdiction: not new, exercised for generations, here reconfirmed. Toll exemption on their own produce: explicitly stated as a privilege held *für Alters*, of old. Bondage: confirmed only *where it has been introduced and is customary*, which is a confirmation and not a grant, and grounded on instruments a century old. The buying-out of peasants: authorised *vermöge des Landes-Reversus de Ao. 1540. und 1572.*, by virtue of instruments of 1540 and 1572. Descent of fiefs: a clarification of existing practice. What the estates of Brandenburg received in 1653 was, almost throughout, a written confirmation of what they already had.

And what the Elector received was one thing that had never existed before: the principle that the maintenance of soldiers was a standing charge on the country, granted for a term of years rather than voted campaign by campaign, and administered by his officers. Six and a half years is a small term. It is also the difference between an emergency levy and a subscription.

The apparatus followed almost at once, and it followed from the money rather than from the sword. The Privy Council was reformed in 1651. The war commissariat — established in the 1650s as a purely military administration to raise and victual troops, and presided over for much of the reign by Joachim Friedrich von Blumenthal — was progressively handed the collection of the taxes that paid for them, until the body that fed the army had become the body that assessed the country. From 1667 the towns paid a new consumption tax, the excise, collected by that same apparatus; the countryside paid the contribution. And there the nobility's exemption, so carefully reconfirmed in 1653, did its second and unintended work: because the manor paid little and the town and village paid much, the fiscal machine had no reason to negotiate with the estates at all once it could reach the taxpayers directly. During the Northern War the Elector simply took what he needed without asking. After 1653 no general diet of Brandenburg ever met again.

Fourteen years later, writing for his son in a document he intended nobody else to read, he set down what that had been for:

wan Der CammerStaadts wider in gutten stande ist, So werdet Ihr mittell gnugsahm haben, vndt habt Ihr alß dan nicht vrsache die Stende umb geldt zuersuchen, oder anzusprechen, Auch ist es alßdan nicht nottig ville vndt kostbare Lantage zu halten, Den iemehr Lantage Ihr haltet, iemehr Autoritet Euch benommen wirdt, weil Die Stende alzeit was suchen, so der Herschaft ahn Ihrer hocheitt nachtheillig ist.

When the chamber's finances are again in good order you will have means enough, and then you will have no cause to ask or apply to the estates for money. Nor will it then be necessary to hold many and costly diets — for the more diets you hold, the more authority is taken from you, because the estates always seek something prejudicial to the lordship's sovereignty.

Set that beside Article 14 of the recess, sealed under his own hand in 1653: *in weighty matters, on which the country's prospering or ruin depends, We will conclude and undertake nothing without the knowledge and counsel of Our loyal estates.* The two statements are not a lie followed by a confession. They are two accurate documents addressed to two audiences who were never going to compare them — the one a public instrument the estates would keep and cite, the other a private paper of which he

wrote, at the end: *Vndt hab ich diesses auß meinem eigenhandigen concept abgeschriben, welches ich alsofordt darauf verbrandt* — and I copied this out from my own handwritten draft, which I thereupon immediately burned.

So the transaction was not a purchase of submission. Nobody submitted in 1653. It was an enclosure: the buyer paid in confirmations of things the seller already possessed, and received in exchange a form — a standing charge and the machine to collect it — which within a decade made the seller unnecessary. The tell is procedural rather than substantive, and it is the sort of tell worth looking for elsewhere. The estates went on holding their privileges, their courts, their exemptions and their tax-administering committees for another century and a half. What they stopped holding was the meeting.

The date the floor was completed: a treaty, not a battle

In Brandenburg the estates had no protector but themselves. In the Duchy of Prussia they had one, and this is where the shape of the thing shows most clearly, because we can watch a set of genuine liberties expire on a datable instrument.

The duchy was a fief of the Polish crown. The estates of Prussia — the Königsberg towns, the nobility, the Landtag — had spent a century and a half building their position on that fact: a duke who oppressed them could be complained of to his suzerain, and a duke who needed his investiture confirmed had to keep them quiet first. Frederick William knew exactly what the vassalage had cost his house and said so privately, that it could not all be written down, and that the archives and the accounts would testify to some of it.

The Second Northern War gave him the opportunity to buy the suzerainty out. He allied first with Sweden, then, when that failed to deliver, changed sides: by the treaty of Wehlau of 19 September 1657, confirmed at Bromberg that November, John Casimir renounced the Polish crown's suzerainty over the duchy and recognised the Elector and his heirs as sovereign, in exchange for six thousand troops against the Swedes. The Peace of Oliva, 3 May 1660, confirmed it internationally.

The Prussian estates were not parties to any of it. That was Hieronymus Roth's stated grievance, and it was exactly correct: the Schöppenmeister of Kneiphof held that the estates ought to have been consulted on the treaties of Wehlau and Oliva. He had identified the mechanism precisely and it did him no good whatever, because the instruments he was objecting to had abolished the standing from which the objection could be made. In 1661 the Elector informed the Prussian diet that he held *jus supremi et absoluti domini* and that the Landtag could assemble only by his permission. Königsberg refused the oath and wrote to Warsaw asking whether the city might

become subjects of the Polish king once more, as it had been in the past. No help came. In October 1662 the Elector arrived in Königsberg with two thousand soldiers and had Roth arrested; the remark attributed to him by the scholarship — that Roth would be interrogated the next day, condemned the day after and executed on the Tuesday or Wednesday — may or may not be his exact words, but the outcome is on record. Roth refused to petition for mercy. He was held in the fortress of Peitz for the rest of his life; a plea for clemency was rejected in 1676; he died there in 1678, sixteen years after his arrest.

On 18 October 1663 the Prussian estates swore fealty at Königsberg and had their privileges confirmed — with the caveat that the privileges were not to be used to obstruct the exercise of the Elector's sovereignty, which is a way of confirming a liberty and voiding it in the same sentence. When the diet of 1669 haggled over taxes, the remaining leader of the noble opposition, Colonel Christian Ludwig von Kalckstein, went by sledge to Warsaw to lay a protest before the Sejm. The Polish king refused to extradite him. The Elector therefore instructed his envoy in Warsaw, Eusebius von Brandt, to take him: at the end of 1670 Kalckstein was seized in the Polish capital, rolled in a carpet and carried back to Prussia. Poland protested and did nothing further. He was tried in 1671 by a special court composed mostly of non-Prussians, tortured to name his accomplices, condemned in January 1672 and beheaded at Memel on 8 November — the only political execution of the reign. In 1673 and 1674 the Elector took taxes the Prussian estates had not granted, and put a garrison into Königsberg without their consent.

He understood perfectly what he had done and what would be attempted against it. In the testament of 1667, between the two events:

So nehmet solche als ein teueres kleinott Eweres hauses in gute acht, dan auff einer seitten wirdt von den Pollen, auff der anderen seitten von den Preussen selbst sehr darnach getrachtet werden, wie es wider zu vorigem Stande kommen moge.

Take it [the sovereignty] in good keeping as a precious jewel of your house, for on the one side the Poles and on the other the Prussians themselves will strive hard after it, to see how it may be brought back to its former condition.

The Poles and the Prussians themselves. He names his own subjects and his former suzerain in one clause, as parties to the same interest, which is the most accurate description of the Prussian estates' position anybody wrote in the seventeenth century. Their liberties and the Polish suzerainty were the same object seen from two ends. What the war of 1655–60 bought was not merely a territory's independence; it was the abolition, in the same instrument, of the only external standard to which the duke's

own subjects could appeal against him. Kalckstein went to Warsaw because Warsaw was where the appeal had always gone. He was taken out of Warsaw because it no longer was.

Transferability

The framework's question about a floor is not whether it wins but whether it can be handed on. This case allows an unusually precise answer, and the answer is not the one the battles suggest.

The battles are real enough. At Warsaw in July 1656 the new army fought for three days beside the Swedes and was noticed — observers remarked on its discipline and on its treatment of civilians, which was thought better than that of its allies. On 18 June 1675 at Fehrbellin, after the Elector had brought his forces out of Alsace and marched them some two hundred and fifty kilometres from Franconia to Magdeburg in a fortnight, abandoning the baggage and leaving much of the infantry behind, Derfflinger caught a divided Swedish army and beat it. The engagement was small — a few thousand a side — and its strategic consequences were undone at the peace. Its consequences for reputation were permanent; the sobriquet by which the Elector is still known dates from it.

But a reputation is not a transferable floor, and prestige of that kind is precisely the asset a mediocre successor loses. What made the arrangement transferable was fiscal and administrative, and it can be dated to the stretch between the recess of 1653 and the excise of 1667: the moment at which the army's maintenance ceased to be a thing granted and became a thing collected, by an apparatus that reported to the ruler rather than to the payers. After that the army did not depend on anyone's continuing consent, including the ruler's own competence. When Frederick William died in 1688 a force of about thirty thousand men — reported at some forty-five thousand at the wartime peak of 1678 — passed intact to a son with no military gifts whatever, in the middle of no crisis, and nothing happened. That is the test, and it is the same test the collection has applied elsewhere: a founding is complete when its founder dies and nothing happens.

So the proposition to take away is that the date of a floor's transferability is the date its funding became automatic, not the date it first won a battle. Battles are what a floor is for; they are not what makes it durable, and a study that dates the founding from the victory will date it years late and attribute it to the wrong instrument.

What the floor cost, and who was made to pay it

By the end of the reign the military establishment is reported at something like a million and a half thaler a year, roughly half of all state spending. That is the sum. The distribution is the finding.

The countryside paid the contribution; the towns, from 1667, paid the excise; the nobility's estates, by the express terms of the instrument that founded the arrangement, paid neither the toll on their own produce nor the direct burdens their villagers bore. The Elector's own domain peasants paid him directly, which is why the testament is unsentimental about them in a way that repays quoting, since it states the logic of extraction more plainly than any theorist could:

das keine Bauren oder wuste buffen weck geschenckt, dieweill Ewer reichthumb in Preussen in beibehaltung Der viellen buffen vornehmlich bestehet, Derohalben wollet Ihr solche nicht vergeben, den wan man Die Hennen oder hunner vergibet, So werden Sie schwerlich Eier legen.

That no peasants or waste hides be given away, since your wealth in Prussia consists chiefly in the retention of the many hides; therefore you shall not give them away, for when one gives away the hens, they will hardly lay eggs.

And, on the same page of the same private paper, the corollary that is usually quoted as evidence of the Elector's paternalism and is better read as an instruction in husbandry:

wan aber notwendig krig sein muß, so lasset in Ewere Landen gutte ordre halten, vndt gebet nicht zu das Ewere vnterthanen vnterdruckt vndt vergewaltiget werden, den durch Ihre mittell musset Ihrs außfuhren.

But when war must needs be, keep good order in your lands, and do not permit your subjects to be oppressed and violated — for it is by their means that you must carry it through.

Both sentences say the same thing and neither is cruel. They are the observations of a man who has watched a country consumed by armies living off it, has concluded that a ruined country pays nothing, and is instructing his heir to protect the source. That is a real restraint and it produced real relief — Article 36 of the recess remits arrears wholesale for the years the country lay waste, and Article 41 grants six years free of dues to anyone taking up an abandoned holding in the electoral demesnes. It is also, in its own terms, a calculation about laying hens. The framework holds that extraction settles at the edge of what the ruled will bear, held there by the credibility of

punishment and the availability of exit. Here the ruler states the upper bound himself, in his own hand, for his son's guidance, and the bound is not a moral one.

Reading the founding transaction against the framework

Four things, of which the first is a correction to what this study expected to find.

The founding bargain was an enclosure, not an exchange, and the way to see it is to price both sides. The expectation going in was that the Elector purchased the nobility's acquiescence and paid for it in authority over the peasantry. The document does not support that. Almost everything the estates received in 1653 was a confirmation of what they already held and had held for generations — jurisdiction, toll exemption, the descent of fiefs, bondage *where it has been introduced and is customary*, the buying-out of peasants on the authority of instruments of 1540 and 1572. What the Elector received was a legal form that had not existed: the maintenance of soldiers as a standing charge for a term of years, with his own officers collecting it. So the general statement is this: **when reading a founding transaction, price both sides against what each already possessed. Where one party is paid in confirmations and the other receives a new permanent instrument, no exchange has occurred — an enclosure has, and the buyer has acquired the mechanism by which he will never have to buy again.** The diagnostic is procedural and easy to miss because it is an absence: look for the last meeting. In Brandenburg the estates kept their privileges, their courts and their exemptions for a century and a half after 1653, and never held a general diet again.

A liberty guaranteed from outside is a lease, and it expires with the guarantee, in the same instrument. The Prussian estates' rights were as substantial as any in northern Europe and rested, in the end, on one fact: their duke was somebody else's vassal. Wehlau and Oliva removed that fact, and the confirmation of the privileges in 1663 — subject to the caveat that they must not obstruct the exercise of sovereignty — is what a liberty looks like the moment after its guarantor has gone: intact on parchment, void in operation. Roth diagnosed it correctly and it saved him nothing, because the treaties had abolished the standing from which he objected, and the framework should record why: **where a population's protections depend on an external guarantor, dating the guarantor's exit dates the protections' expiry, however solemnly they are reconfirmed afterwards — and the reconfirmation is itself the tell, because a right that has to be reconfirmed on terms has become a right held at pleasure.** This is the familiar proposition about distant audiences, stated from the subject's side rather than the ruler's, and it is sharper there: it is not only that succeeding in obtaining what the distant audience held abolishes the check, but that

the same instrument which obtains it strips the internal opposition of its cause of action. Kalckstein was seized in Warsaw because Warsaw was where the appeal had always gone, and was no longer.

A floor becomes transferable when its funding becomes automatic, not when it first wins. Warsaw in 1656 and Fehrbellin in 1675 made the Elector's reputation and neither made his army permanent; reputation is exactly the asset an ordinary successor loses. What made the arrangement survive its founder was the sequence from the standing charge of 1653 through the war commissariat to the excise of 1667 — the point at which the money stopped being granted and started being collected. The proof is the succession of 1688: about thirty thousand men, a son of no military talent, no crisis, and nothing happens. **Date a floor's transferability from the fiscal instrument, not from the victory; a study that dates it from the battle will be years late and will credit the wrong mechanism.**

A right of appeal coupled with a penalty for unsuccessful appeal is a claim staked, not a right conferred. The recess grants the villager appeal and nullity in Article 20 and sends him to the tower in Article 22 if his complaint fails. Read as ethics this is a contradiction; read as engineering it is a valve, and it tells you what the sovereign is doing. He is preserving his standing as the last resort — which is what makes the manorial jurisdiction a delegation rather than a possession — while keeping the flow of business down to what he can carry, at the complainant's risk rather than his own. **Wherever you find that pairing, you are looking at a ruler who intends to be the final judge and cannot yet afford to be the first,** and the clause is worth marking, because the hand he is keeping in the manor is the hand a later ruler will use to get back in.

One thing this module does not do is treat 1653 as the moment the estates were destroyed. They were not. The newer scholarship is right that the noble-dominated estates and their fiscal committees went on wielding real authority long afterwards, that the villager kept going to law and often won, and that the labour shortage kept his bargaining position better than the older literature allowed. What ended in 1653 was narrower and more precise than the legend: not the estates' power, but their standing as the body a ruler had to convene before he could keep an army.

A note on sources. The primary quotations are given exactly, in the original orthography, and are in the public domain. The Brandenburg recess of 26 July 1653 is quoted from the text printed in Christian Otto Mylius, *Corpus Constitutionum Marchicarum* (Berlin and Halle, 1737–55), part 6, section 1, no. CXVIII, as reproduced in *German History in Documents and Images*; the article numbers given are those of that text, and readers should note that the copy printed there leaves the total

sum blank, so that the figure of 530,000 thaler over six and a half years comes from the historical literature and not from the document. The political testament of 19 May 1667 is quoted from the text of the Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin (BPH, Urk. III.1, Nr. 18), printed in Richard Dietrich's edition of the Hohenzollern political testaments (1986) and reproduced by the same project; the spelling is the Elector's chancery's and is reproduced without correction. All translations from both documents are my own and are deliberately literal, at some cost to elegance.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited. The revisionist case against reading the 1653 recess as the founding charter of Prussian absolutism — that its terms do not bear the conclusion, that the noble-dominated estates and their fiscal organs went on exercising significant authority, and that the Elector declined to shut off village appeals against seigneurial abuse — is stated in the editorial apparatus of the German History in Documents and Images edition and rests on the work of William Hagen and others; I have taken it and adjusted the module's claim accordingly. The account of the Prussian estates' resistance follows the standard narrative; Karin Friedrich's work on Royal Prussia is among the sources cited for Königsberg's approach to the Polish king.

Contested and uncertain points, flagged rather than smoothed. Army figures for the 1640s vary considerably between accounts — some give around three thousand by 1641–42 and eight thousand by the later 1640s, others about five thousand five hundred in 1643–44 including a bodyguard of five hundred musketeers — and I have given the range rather than choosing. The strength of about thirty thousand at the Elector's death and some forty-five thousand at the wartime peak of 1678, and the figure of roughly a million and a half thaler for military costs at around half of state expenditure by 1688, are the figures usually reported and should be treated as orders of magnitude. The remark attributed to Frederick William on Roth's arrest — that he would be interrogated the next day, condemned the day after and executed on the Tuesday or Wednesday — appears in the scholarship in English renderings whose German original I have not been able to verify against a source reproducing it, and I have therefore reported it as attributed rather than quoted it as his words; the same applies to a remark about not making an elephant out of a gnat, which I have left out. The Treaty of Christburg's dating aside, the date of Roth's arrest is given in some sources as 18 October 1662 and in others simply as October of that year.

A limitation carried forward from the opening of this study: the Prussian and Polish dimensions of this module are drawn substantially from German-language and English-language material, and the Polish scholarship on Wehlau, Bromberg and the Kalckstein affair reaches conclusions I have not been able to weigh properly. A reader

should assume that the account of what the Polish crown did and did not do in 1670 is the weakest-sourced passage here.

FORTY THALER FOR A HORSE

The settlement: who got what, what the boundary between inside and outside was actually attached to, and the year the nobility's ancient obligation to ride was bought out for cash and re-created as a salaried commission

What was there to divide

A settlement divides conquered wealth. This one had no conquest to divide, which is the first thing that makes it unusual and the thing that decides its shape. The land east of the Elbe had been held by the same families, in many cases, for three or four centuries; nobody in the eighteenth century was distributing anything. What the Hohenzollerns had to work with was a bundle already in existence, and the whole of what follows is the story of that bundle being taken apart, priced, and reassembled with the pieces in different hands.

The bundle was the *Rittergut*, the noble estate, and it is essential to see that it was not simply farmland. Four distinct things were tied together in it. There was the demesne — the arable the lord farmed on his own account, with the labour services of his villagers. There was the *Patrimonialgerichtsbarkeit*, the manorial jurisdiction: the right to hold the court of first instance over the people living on the estate, confirmed to the nobility in the great recess of 1653 and exercised down to the nineteenth century. There was fiscal quality: an estate registered as a *Rittergut* paid no land tax and its owner shipped his own grain and wool free of toll. And there was tenure: it was held as a *Lehen*, a fief, in return for a specific and ancient service — the *Lehnspferd*, the mounted man the vassal owed his prince when called.

Take the four apart and you have the whole political history of the Prussian eighteenth century. The demesne was left alone and grew. The jurisdiction was left alone and was carefully hedged. The fiscal exemption was left alone and became the settlement's largest single subsidy. And the fourth — the service — was abolished outright, in a single edict, in the twelfth week of the reign of the man who built the army everybody remembers.

5 January 1717: the *nexus feudal* abolished

Frederick William I came to the throne in 1713 and immediately set about a piece of business his father and grandfather had left alone. A commission was constituted for

the purpose — five privy councillors, Ilgen, Grumbkow, Creutz, Kraut and Katsch — and on his order they drafted an edict which he executed on 5 January 1717 and ordered published in every province. Its object was stated without ornament:

daß alle Adelichen Schultzen- und Bauerleben für allodial erklärt, und der nexus feudalis aufgehoben werden soll, wenn dazu ein jährlicher Canon bewilligt wird.

That all noble, village-magistrate and peasant fiefs shall be declared allodial and the nexus feudalis abolished, provided that an annual canon be granted for it.

The *nexus feudalis* is the tie itself — the legal relation by which the holder held from a lord and owed him service. Abolishing it converted the estate into heritable property, an *Allod*, owned outright. In exchange the King asked an annual money payment reckoned on each mounted man the estate had formerly owed. He opened at fifty thaler per *Ritterpferd*. The nobility of the provinces did not thank him for it. Instead of the assent he expected, the overwhelming majority lodged objections or refused, the difficulties compounded by the fact that the terms of tenure differed from province to province and every province had to be negotiated with separately; the archives of the commission are full of the estate-owners' declarations and of the complaints of the Königsberg government that the new canon was higher than what its landowners had been paying in lieu of knight-service before. By the resolution to the Kurmark deputies of 17 April 1717 the King came down to forty. In Pomerania the business dragged on for years.

Read the transaction from each side. The nobleman surrendered a service that had long since fallen out of use — the feudal levy was, as one nineteenth-century account puts it, an army long unusable and long unpractised — and received, for that dead letter, absolute heritable ownership of his land. He would have been irrational to refuse, and the objections were about the price, not the principle. The King surrendered his lordship over the tenure and received a permanent annual revenue, assessed per horse, on every noble estate in the monarchy.

But the revenue was not the point, and a study that stops at the money will miss what happened in 1717. Forty thaler a year per horse is not a fiscal revolution. What the edict did was to sever, cleanly and by agreement, the last legal thread connecting the possession of a noble estate to the obligation to appear armed. After 5 January 1717 the ownership of land in Brandenburg-Prussia carried no military duty whatever. The clause that the medieval settlement had used to buy armed service — the clause that leaves a great landholder with a retinue and therefore leaves a king with a permanent

civil-war risk inside his own settlement — was deleted from the Prussian arrangement by mutual consent, in return for property rights and a tax.

September 1717: the same men, re-hired

Eight months later the same King founded, in Berlin, the *Königlich Preußisches Corps de Cadets*, a central cadet institute, and he did not wait for applications. Registers were compiled of the noble boys of his provinces between the ages of twelve and eighteen, and the King selected from the lists in his own hand which of them would go. The established nobility resisted this bitterly and he overrode them. What he was offering, in the reading of the sympathetic accounts, was a career and a standing to the sons of families that were in many cases genuinely poor; what he was doing, structurally, was conscripting the class whose feudal service he had just bought out.

His predecessors' officer corps had been an international market: adventurers from every country, some with pasts, whose obedience was uncertain. Frederick William removed the foreigners as a matter of principle, cleared out the men he thought unfit, and drew in the sons of the native nobility, at first — the phrase in the older German literature is exact — *nicht ohne Anwendung von Zwang*, not without the application of compulsion. By the end of the reign the officer corps was overwhelmingly noble and overwhelmingly Prussian, and it stayed so; under his son almost all army officers and almost all senior officials were noblemen, and it became harder for a commoner to be ennobled than it had been under earlier rulers.

Set the two events of 1717 beside each other, because they are one transaction described twice.

In January the nobleman stopped owing a horse and started owning his land. In September his son was entered on a list and taken into the King's school to be made into an officer. The obligation to serve did not vanish; it was moved. It ceased to be a real burden running with a parcel of land, enforceable by the courts and discharged by sending a rider, and became a career held from the sovereign, granted and withdrawn at his pleasure, paid for in salary and rank. The old form left a magnate with men who followed him. The new form left him with a commission that the King could take away.

This is the move the framework already knows from a different setting: the paying of a warlord to stop being a warlord, converting a capacity for organised violence into a possession, because a possession can be taken by a court and a retinue only by a war. What Prussia adds is the second half. The colonial version of the move disarms the co-opted elite and stops there, and must then do its own policing forever. Prussia disarmed its nobility of its independent military capacity and, in the same year, re-armed the

same families inside the state as salaried professionals under a chain of command the sovereign owned. The men who did the fighting were the same men. What changed was whose the army was.

The other register: 1733, and the hearths

The officer corps solved the top of the settlement. The bottom was solved sixteen years later, and by an instrument of the same kind — a list.

Through the 1710s and 1720s the Prussian regiments had been recruiting by main force, competing with one another for men, outbidding each other's bounties and occasionally simply abducting each other's recruits, and doing enough damage to the countryside that in 1721 the King forbade the recruiting of any settled native at all. What replaced the chaos was announced not as a great law but as a set of cabinet orders. On 1 May 1733 the King wrote to Field Marshal Finck von Finckenstein:

So habe ich resolvirt und zur Conservation der Armée gut befunden, eine richtige Disposition zu machen, was jedes Regiment zu seinen enröllirten für Oerther und Feuer-Stetten haben soll. Ich schicke Euch also die Disposition, was euer Regiment für Feuer-Stetten bekommet, an der Zahl 7790, so in 10 Theile getheilet auf jede Compagnie ohngefehr 700 und etliche 10 Feuer-Stellen ausmachet.

So I have resolved, and found it good for the conservation of the army, to make a proper disposition of what places and hearths each regiment shall have for its enrolled men. I therefore send you the disposition of what hearths your regiment receives, to the number of 7,790, which, divided into ten parts, makes for each company about seven hundred and some tens of hearths.

That is the whole system in a sentence: a country apportioned among regiments by the fireplace. A regiment in the core provinces received a canton of roughly five to six thousand hearths, more on the periphery. The enrolment of the boys was performed by the parish clergyman, who had the church books and was required to list every male in his parish, and it was done at confirmation, at about sixteen; the man so entered could expect to be actually called at about twenty. Exempted were the sons of noblemen, the sons of the wealthiest burghers, and the sons of clergy studying theology — a list of exemptions that tells you more about the shape of Prussian society than any description of it could.

The system's genius, and its cruelty, lie in one feature: the cantonist was not taken away for life. He served a short period each year — commonly two or three months of drill after the harvest — and went home on furlough for the rest. That is what made an army of eighty-odd thousand affordable in a poor country of two and a quarter million

or so, and it is why the Prussian establishment was, proportionally, the largest in Europe by 1740.

But the furlough only works if the man comes back, and this is where the manor and the regiment fuse. Otto Büsch's study of the old-Prussian military system makes the argument that has stood since: it was precisely the villager's social bindedness inside the manorial relation — his farm, his kin, his lord, the fact that there was nowhere for him to go and someone with legal power over him where he came from — that made him the ideal object of the King's military policy. The bond that the sixteenth-century diets had legislated for the profit of the grain trade turned out, two centuries later, to be the guarantee on a furlough. The Junker's authority over his villagers and the King's ability to send a soldier home for nine months of the year were the same fact.

And so, in the same movement, the crown became the protector of the peasantry against the nobility — Büsch's phrase for it is peasant protection as soldier protection. The kings restrained *Bauernlegen*, the absorption of peasant holdings into demesne, especially on their own domains, and Frederick II tried repeatedly and with limited success to restrain it on noble estates too. Read the motive in his own account of the policy, from the political testament he wrote for his successor in 1752:

One should further prevent peasants from buying nobles' lands, or nobles, peasants', because peasants cannot serve as officers in the army, and if the nobles convert peasant holdings into demesne farms, they diminish the number of inhabitants and cultivators.

Two prohibitions, two reasons, and neither of them is about justice. The peasant may not buy up because a peasant cannot be an officer. The nobleman may not buy down because absorbing a farm strikes a hearth off the roll. The land market in Prussia was frozen in both directions, and the freezing was defended by the King on the grounds that each class had a function and the land was the thing that assigned it. When the crown shielded a villager from his lord it was protecting an entry in a register.

Who may have subjects

Now the boundary question, which is the one the framework insists on: what exactly marked the inside of this settlement from the outside? Not, as one would expect, a bloodline.

When the whole arrangement was finally codified in the *Allgemeines Landrecht* of 1794, its second part gave a title each to the three estates, and defined them by exclusion in a way that is almost comic in its circularity — the peasant estate comprises all

inhabitants of the flat country who occupy themselves with the direct working of agriculture, in so far as they are not exempted from that estate by noble birth, office, or particular rights; the burgher estate comprises all inhabitants of the state who by their birth can be counted neither to the nobility nor to the peasantry. The nobility's title opens with the sentence that states the entire eighteenth-century bargain as a job description:

Dem Adel, als dem ersten Stande im Staate, liegt, nach seiner Bestimmung, die Vertheidigung des Staats, so wie die Unterstützung der äußern Würde und innern Verfassung desselben, hauptsächlich ob.

Upon the nobility, as the first estate in the state, there principally lies, according to its destination, the defence of the state, as well as the support of its external dignity and internal constitution.

Not a privilege — a *Bestimmung*, a destination or determination, and an *obliegen*, a lying-upon. The code goes on to give the nobility a preferential claim to the offices of honour in the state for which it has made itself fit, and then, in the next section, reserves to the sovereign the judgement of fitness and the choice among several applicants. That pairing is the officer's commission written into the code: a class entitled to the places, and a king who decides which of them gets one.

But rank is not the operative marker, and the code says which is. Under the rubric asking who may have subjects:

Nur die Besitzer von Rittergütern können in der Regel Unterthanen haben; und herrschaftliche Rechte über dergleichen Leute ausüben.

Only the possessors of noble estates can, as a rule, have subjects, and exercise seigneurial rights over such people.

Possessors of noble estates. Not noblemen. The thing that conferred power over other human beings in eighteenth-century Prussia was the ownership of a particular kind of registered parcel. Nobility by birth or by royal grant gave a man rank, precedence, the presumption of a commission and the right to be called *von*; it did not, by itself, give him a single subject. A *Rittergut* did. The manorial jurisdiction, the labour services, the land-tax exemption, the toll freedom and the local police power all ran with the soil, and the crown's central instrument for defending the whole settlement was accordingly not a genealogical office but a conveyancing rule: noble estates were not to be sold to commoners without royal consent.

This is worth pausing on, because it inverts what one expects of a caste order and it is administratively very cheap. A settlement whose boundary runs through blood has to

police descent — it needs heralds, registers of marriages, a law of bastardy, a machinery of proof, and it has to litigate every disputed pedigree. A settlement whose boundary is attached to a transferable thing needs only to watch the land market. There were perhaps twelve or thirteen thousand *Rittergüter* in the monarchy; a chancery can watch twelve thousand parcels. It cannot watch a nation's marriages.

The three shares, and the crown's own

Lay the division out and it sorts into three, with the sovereign's own estate as a fourth beside them.

The nobility received: absolute heritable ownership of the estate from 1717, in exchange for the canon; the manorial jurisdiction of first instance; exemption of the estate from the land tax; freedom from tolls on the export of its own produce; the local district office of *Landrat*, filled from the county's own estate-owners on their nomination and confirmed by the king, which made a nobleman the crown's administrator in his own neighbourhood; the practical monopoly of army commissions; and the protection of the land market against purchasers from below. What it gave up was the *nexus feudal*, the diet, and any independent military capacity.

The burghers received the towns and the trades, and were shut out of the countryside. They paid the excise, from which the noble estate was largely insulated, and they were not to buy *Rittergüter*. But they received a share the older picture underrates: the crown's domains, which by the middle of the century amounted to something like a third of the land surface of the monarchy, were administered by chambers and leased in parcels, on terms, to well-off commoners — general lessees who could employ under-lessees, and who took the estates complete with their resident subjects and those subjects' service obligations. A burgher could not own a lordship. He could rent one from the King. And the civil service, particularly the judiciary and the fiscal administration, absorbed educated commoners in numbers, so that the second-largest career in Prussia was open where the first was closed.

The peasantry received the hide and kept it. That is not nothing, and the older literature's picture of a mass reduced to chattel does not survive the estate records: the villager held his farm, could go to law, and did. What he received in this settlement, though, is best stated as what he could not do. He could not leave without permission. He could not buy a noble estate, by the King's express policy. He could not, in the eastern provinces, escape the labour services. And from about sixteen his name stood in a regimental roll kept by his own pastor.

The crown kept its own. By an ordinance of 13 August 1713 Frederick William I declared the royal domains indivisible and inalienable — the King making his own

estate untouchable in the same generation in which he made his nobility's fully alienable and then restricted who could buy it. It was a large holding and a very large revenue: by 1739 the domain income came to nearly half of a total state income of something like seven million thaler, and its contribution to the military budget alone was close to a third of that budget. This is the case the framework has wanted: a sovereign who is also by a wide margin the country's largest landowner, and whose interest in the agrarian question is therefore never disinterested. When the King restrained his nobility's treatment of villagers, he was also a competitor for the same labour.

The default, run down the chain

The framework's test of a settlement is not what it granted but what each recipient would lose if it ended tomorrow. Run it.

The estate-owner in the Uckermark: he loses his exemption from the land tax, his freedom from toll on his rye, the court he holds in his own hall, the district office his neighbours nominated him to, and his son's commission. He is not asked to approve of the King, and a great many of them did not.

His son the lieutenant: he loses everything he has, because he has nothing else. The nobility of the eastern provinces was land-rich in the sense that it held land and cash-poor in almost every other sense, and the cadet school and the regiment were what the second and third sons had instead of an inheritance.

The burgher lessee of a domain: he loses a business that lets a commoner run a lordship, and he loses it to whichever nobleman would take it back.

The villager: this is where the answer stops being simple, and the honesty of the module depends on saying so. He would lose the labour services and the lord's court, which were real burdens. He would also lose the crown's protection of his holding against absorption, the appeal to the King's courts, and the whole basis of his own furlough. Whether he came out ahead depended on which of those went first, and neither he nor anybody else could arrange the order.

Add them and the arrangement is held up not by loyalty but by the fact that almost every man inside it is standing on a plank that is also part of the floor. Nobody needs to conspire and nobody needs to agree. What makes the Prussian version unusually tight is that the planks are nailed to each other: the officer's career rests on his estate's status, his estate's labour rests on the villagers' bond, the villagers' bond is what makes the furlough system work, and the furlough system is what makes the army affordable, which is what the officer's career is.

The name

One more piece of the settlement is worth putting on the record here, though its full working belongs to the account of what this order asked people to believe. It concerns the officer corps, and it comes from Frederick II's political testament of 1752, in the passage where he explains why noblemen must be forbidden to take service abroad:

It is also necessary to prevent noblemen from taking service abroad, to inspire them with an esprit de corps and a national spirit: this is what I have worked for, and why, in the course of the first war, I did everything possible to spread the name of "Prussian," in order to teach the officers that, whatever province they came from, they were all counted as Prussians, and that for that reason all the provinces, however separated from one another, form a united body.

The name of a Baltic people extinguished by conquest, whose last speakers had died in the plague and famine of 1709 to 1711, was propagated deliberately by the King in the 1740s as a device for teaching officers from Cleves and the Mark and Pomerania and Magdeburg that they belonged to one another. He states the purpose in his own hand and does not pretend it was found rather than made. The settlement needed a word for its inside, and the word was manufactured.

Reading the settlement against the framework

Four contributions, the first of which is a genuine addition to the menu of considerations.

The consideration was not deleted; it was bought out and re-let. The framework distinguishes two forms of enfeoffment: the medieval one, which grants land in exchange for armed service and thereby installs a permanent civil-war risk in the same clause, and the colonial one, which performs the same grant with the service clause deleted, so that the grantee is left with a possession and no retinue. Prussia does a third thing, and it is better than either. In January 1717 the service clause was bought out for cash — forty thaler a year per horse, and the *nexus feudal* dissolved by consent. In September 1717 the same families' sons were entered on a register and taken into a royal school to be made into officers. The service survived; the retinue did not. **Where a feudal service is commuted to money in the same generation that a salaried officer corps is created out of the same families, read the two as one transaction: the disarming of a class and its re-employment on the sovereign's terms.** This is cheaper than the colonial version, which disarms an elite and must then police the

ground forever with its own men, and it is safer than the medieval version, which leaves the king's army as the sum of his magnates' retinues. It also explains a fact the older accounts treat as a puzzle — that the Prussian nobility was simultaneously the most militarised in Europe and the least capable of rebellion. Those are not two facts. The commission that made it the first is what took away the second.

The boundary of a settlement can be attached to a thing rather than to a person, and where it is, the operative law is conveyancing. Prussian rank ran by birth or royal grant, but power over other human beings ran with a parcel: only the possessors of noble estates could, as a rule, have subjects. **A settlement whose marker is a transferable thing is defended by regulating a market; a settlement whose marker is descent must police a genealogy** — and the first is enormously cheaper, which is why it is worth looking for. It also carries a prediction that a study of this order should hold in advance rather than discover late: an arrangement bounded by a land market can be dismantled by opening that market, without abolishing a single title or touching anybody's rank, and anyone who wishes to break it will find that the shortest instrument is a conveyancing statute.

A settlement is complete when both of its ends have been written down, and the tell is that the same administration keeps both registers. In 1717 the Prussian state made a list of every noble boy in the monarchy between twelve and eighteen. In 1733 it apportioned every hearth in the monarchy among its regiments and had the parish clergy enter the boys at confirmation. One register produced officers and the other produced the men they commanded, and both were kept by the same war and domains administration. **Look for the pair.** A hierarchy has a top and a bottom; a settlement has two rolls, and the moment the second is compiled by the same office that compiles the first, the arrangement has stopped being a social fact and become an instrument.

Where a sovereign protects the class at the bottom of his settlement, look first for the register it is enrolled on. The Prussian crown restrained the absorption of peasant farms and shielded villagers from their lords, and the protection was real. Its stated reason, in the King's own testament, was that a nobleman who converts peasant holdings diminishes the number of inhabitants and cultivators, and that a peasant cannot serve as an officer. A hearth absorbed is a hearth struck off a regimental roll and a taxpayer struck off a list. **The protection of a subordinate class by the apex is a reliable sign not of benevolence but of a competing claim on the same bodies**, and the framework should expect to find, wherever it meets such protection, a second party — usually the immediate lord — who wants those bodies for something else. Two

extractors bidding for one population produce something that looks from below very like a right.

One caution to carry forward. It is tempting to read this settlement as the moment the Junker was made into the obedient servant of the crown, because that is what the arrangement was designed to produce and because the later literature says so. The design and the result are different questions. The nobility resisted the allodification, resisted the cadet school, went on running its estates for its own profit, went on litigating against its villagers and losing, and went on being, in the eastern provinces, a landed interest with purposes of its own. What 1717 and 1733 achieved was narrower and more durable than obedience: they made the nobility's *interests* inseparable from the crown's without requiring it to hold a single opinion. That is what a settlement is for, and it is why the framework insists that the default requires alignment and not agreement.

A note on sources. The German primary quotations are given exactly and in the original orthography. The edict of 5 January 1717 abolishing the *nexus feudalis* is quoted in the wording reproduced from the collections of Prussian edicts; the history of the Lehnskommission, the membership of Ilgen, Grumbkow, Creutz, Kraut and Katsch, the reduction of the canon from fifty to forty thaler by the resolution to the Kurmark deputies of 17 April 1717, and the nobility's objections are drawn from the finding aid to the *Allodifikation der Lehen* holdings of the Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz. The cabinet order of 1 May 1733 to Finck von Finckenstein is quoted from the text reproduced in the scholarly literature on the canton regulation, which prints the passage on the disposition of hearths; the fuller order is edited in Eugen von Frauenholz's collection and reprinted in Helmut Neuhaus's volume of sources for the age of absolutism. The clauses of the *Allgemeines Landrecht für die Preußischen Staaten* of 1 June 1794 are quoted from the text as reproduced in university teaching materials from the code itself. Translations from German are my own and deliberately literal.

Two flags on quotation. First, Frederick II wrote his political testaments in French; the two passages given here are quoted from the published English translation reproduced by *German History in Documents and Images*, and I have not been able to check them against the French original, so they should be read as a translation and not as his words. Second, the *Landrecht* provision on who may have subjects is quoted from a source that gives the section number as ninety-one but does not, in the excerpt available to me, make the title unambiguous; I have therefore given the rubric and the text and left the citation to that.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited. The argument that the villager's bindedness within the manorial relation is what made him the suitable object of Prussian military policy, and that peasant protection in this system functions as soldier protection, is Otto Büsch's, from his study of the military system and social life of old Prussia between 1713 and 1807; his broader thesis about the social militarisation of Prussian-German society is contested and I have used only the narrower point, which the estate and regimental material supports. The characterisation of Frederick II's policy toward the nobility — the refusal to dilute it by ennobling the self-made, the protection of noble land against urban purchasers — follows the standard accounts.

Contested figures are given as ranges or flagged. The growth of the army under Frederick William I is given in the literature both as roughly forty thousand to eighty thousand and as thirty-eight thousand to eighty-three thousand, and the share of state expenditure going to the military as about two-thirds; the domain revenue figures for 1739 — nearly half of a state income of some seven million thaler, contributing nearly a third of the military budget — come from the older German biographical literature and should be treated as an order of magnitude. Estimates of the proportion of the monarchy's land held as royal domain vary; about a third is the figure usually given. The number of *Rittergüter* in the monarchy I have given as an approximation because the count depends on which provinces and which decade are meant. Where a figure could not be pinned to a source I have left it out rather than round it.

A limitation, stated again because this module compounds it: the account of the settlement given here is drawn overwhelmingly from the eastern and central provinces, where the *Rittergut* order was strongest, and from German-language material. Cleves and Mark on the Rhine, where the agrarian order was quite different and the estates retained more, are treated here only in passing, and the Polish-speaking populations acquired in the partitions fall outside this module's period entirely and will need their own treatment rather than an assumption that what is described here was simply extended to them.

TO POPULATE THE LAND

The robe: four separate stories told to four audiences that never compared notes, the Calvinist house that captured a Lutheran clergy instead of converting it, and the crown that was bought with eight thousand men

The problem the dynasty could not solve and therefore went round

Every order lays a story over its force to make the holding cheap, and the story has to be told in a currency the audience already honours, because legitimacy is borrowed and not minted. The Hohenzollerns began with a currency problem so severe that it shaped everything they did afterwards.

In 1613 the Elector John Sigismund publicly took communion in the Reformed rite. His subjects did not follow him. His nobility did not follow him. His own wife did not follow him. In 1615 there was rioting in Berlin over the confessional question, and the estates forced him to pull back; what emerged was a dynasty of one confession ruling a country of another, and the arrangement lasted, unresolved, for two hundred years. The house was Calvinist. The Mark, the duchy of Prussia, Pomerania, Magdeburg, Halberstadt, Minden, Mark and Ravensberg were overwhelmingly Lutheran, and remained so.

An apex in that position has, in principle, three options. It can convert the population, which means force, time and a clergy of its own; the Berlin riots of 1615 priced that one and the price was refused. It can convert itself, which the Hohenzollerns never seriously considered, since the Reformed connection was also their tie to the Dutch and to the wider Calvinist interest in Europe. Or it can do the third thing, which is to leave the creed exactly where it stands and take possession of the institutions that reproduce it.

That is what happened, and the whole of the Prussian robe follows from it. The result is not one story but four, addressed to four audiences that had no occasion to compare notes: the Lutheran population under the floor; the officer corps and the nobility, whose coordination the state could least afford to lose; the courts and the reading public of Europe, whose recognition an upstart kingdom needed and could not compel; and the useful stranger — the Huguenot, the Catholic soldier's son, the

settler from anywhere — whose arrival was worth more than his opinions. Each has to be reconstructed separately, because each was true.

Robe I — toward the Lutherans: a re-termination, not a creed

The public position is stated in the great recess of 1653, in the first of its articles, and it is worth reading as a piece of drafting rather than as a sentiment. The Elector confirms the Augsburg Confession as his Lutheran subjects hold it, guarantees their symbolic books unaltered, promises that nobody shall be compelled or pressed to depart from it, and then adds the disclaimer:

Es soll Ihnen auch davon abzustehen, kein Zwang noch Trang angethan werden, sintemahl Wir Uns der Herrschafft über die Gewissen anzumaßen, niehmales gemeinet gewesen.

Nor shall any compulsion or pressure be applied to them to depart from it, since We have never intended to arrogate to Ourselves lordship over consciences.

He goes on, in the same article, to observe pointedly that most of the considerable posts and benefices in the principal collegiate bodies are to this hour held by Lutherans rather than Reformed, and to promise that he will show his grace and preferment to Lutheran and Reformed alike, without regard to religion. That is a public undertaking of confessional neutrality in appointments, sealed and delivered to the estates.

Fourteen years later he wrote for his son, privately, in the paper he copied out and then burned the draft of:

So ist furnehmlich dahin zu sehen, vndt zu trachten, auf das die Reformirte Religion... In allen Eweren Landen moge vortgepflantzet werden... das wan Solche Subiecta von der Revormirten Religion In Eweren Landen Sich befinden, So da qualificirt vndt geschickt, fur andere zu denen bedinungen vndt officien, zu hoffe vndt im Lande annehmet vndt bestellet, Ja da auch in der Chur Brandenburg keine verhanden, auß der frembde annehmet, vndt den Lutterischen furziehet.

So it is chiefly to be looked to and striven for, that the Reformed religion may be propagated in all your lands... that where such subjects of the Reformed religion are to be found in your lands, qualified and fit, you take and appoint them before others to the posts and offices, at court and in the country; indeed, where none are to be had in the Electorate of Brandenburg, take them from abroad, and prefer them to the Lutherans.

Where none are to be had at home, import them, and prefer them to the Lutherans. Set that beside the 1653 promise of preferment without regard to religion and the gap is exact. But note also what the private paper does *not* say. It insists in the same passage that the propagation must not proceed by means of compulsion, nor by taking away Lutheran churches or diverting their revenues, but out of the ruler's own funds; and it instructs the heir to appoint as preachers and professors men who are not quarrelsome and who do not condemn the ruler's religion as heresy, and to order those who will not comply to leave the country. This is not a plan for conversion. It is a personnel policy with a doctrinal test attached, and the test is not orthodoxy but quietness.

The instrument that made it work came two generations later and is one of the sharpest things in this study. In 1729 Frederick William I decreed that every theologian seeking appointment in Prussia must first study for two years at Halle.

Halle was the university of the Pietists — the renewal movement inside Lutheranism founded on Spener's impulse and built at Halle by August Hermann Francke, whose orphanage, poor school, dispensary and press had made him famous and whose conventicles the Lutheran orthodox had been attacking for thirty years. Francke had been thrown out of Leipzig and expelled from Erfurt at forty-eight hours' notice before the Hohenzollerns took him up; Frederick William I visited the foundations in 1713 and was decisively impressed. The house did not need Halle to be Calvinist. It needed Halle to be a movement that cut across the confessional line, that preached duty, industry, self-examination and obedience, that was hated by exactly the orthodox Lutheran establishment which had defied the dynasty since 1613, and that ran the best teacher-training operation in Germany.

So consider what the 1729 decree actually does. It does not touch a word of the Augsburg Confession. It does not require a single Lutheran to become anything else. It requires that the man who will stand in every village pulpit in the monarchy shall have spent two years being formed in a Prussian institution of the crown's choosing, under teachers the crown favours, before he can be appointed. The creed is left alone; the pipeline that produces its interpreters is taken.

And then the same man does a second job. The parish clergyman held the church books, and it was he who was required to list every male in his parish and to enter the boys on the regimental roll at confirmation. The pastor who preached the catechism kept the canton register. The two functions sat in one office in one village, which is why the Prussian state could afford both a state church it did not confessionally control and an army recruited from a countryside it could not otherwise reach.

Whether the doctrine so installed was held sincerely is the wrong question about the base and cannot be answered in any case. What can be observed is the terminus. A

Lutheran villager in 1740 believed very much what his great-grandfather had believed in 1640, in the same words, out of the same book. What had changed was where the chain of authority behind those words ran to: to a pastor trained at Halle, appointed under a royal ordinance, drawing a salary in a state church whose supreme bishop was the king. The content barely moved. The final clause moved entirely.

There is one further piece of evidence that the doctrine was held as an instrument at the apex, and it is the cleanest available: the philosopher Christian Wolff was driven out of Halle in 1723 at the Pietists' instigation, and recalled to Prussia by Frederick II within months of his accession in 1740. Nothing in Wolff's philosophy had changed in seventeen years. What had changed was which audience the king needed.

Robe II — toward the coordinating class: a robe that was minted

Here is the case's genuine variation, and it is the one the framework should take away from this module. Toward its Lutheran subjects the dynasty borrowed a currency it could not have minted. Toward its own coordinating class it minted one outright, and it worked.

Begin with the emblems, because they are dated to the day. On 17 January 1701, the eve of his coronation, Frederick III instituted the Order of the Black Eagle, the highest order the new kingdom would have, and dedicated the royal arms with a motto: *Suum cuique* — to each his own, or, in the sense the order carried, to each according to his merits. The next day he crowned himself and his wife, and then received anointing. The first nineteen knights, four of them princes of his own house and the rest the leading civil and military figures of Brandenburg-Prussia, had the golden collar placed round their necks by the King himself.

An order of chivalry is a machine for converting a sovereign's favour into a form of honour that the recipients police among themselves, and Frederick built his the day before he had a crown to hang it from. The sequence matters: the honour was manufactured first and the legitimacy it was to distribute arrived twenty-four hours later. Nothing was borrowed here. There was no Prussian chivalric tradition to draw on; there was an ambitious elector, a jeweller, a Latin tag and a list of names.

Two generations on, Frederick II states in his own hand what the whole apparatus was for, and he does it without a shred of mystification. Explaining, in the political testament of 1752, why noblemen must be forbidden to take foreign service:

It is also necessary to prevent noblemen from taking service abroad, to inspire them with an esprit de corps and a national spirit: this is what I have worked for, and why, in the course of the first war, I did everything possible to spread the name

of "Prussian," in order to teach the officers that, whatever province they came from, they were all counted as Prussians, and that for that reason all the provinces, however separated from one another, form a united body.

He propagated the name. He says so, in a document meant for his successor, and he gives the reason: officers from Cleves and Magdeburg and Pomerania and the Mark had nothing in common and had to be given something. The word chosen was the name of a Baltic people conquered in the thirteenth century, whose language had died out in the plague and famine of 1709 to 1711, a generation before the campaign to spread it began.

And the thing so built was then written into law. When the settlement was codified in 1794, the title on the nobility opened not with a privilege but with a job:

Dem Adel, als dem ersten Stande im Staate, liegt, nach seiner Bestimmung, die Vertheidigung des Staats, so wie die Unterstützung der äußern Würde und innern Verfassung desselben, hauptsächlich ob.

Upon the nobility, as the first estate in the state, there principally lies, according to its destination, the defence of the state, as well as the support of its external dignity and internal constitution.

Bestimmung — destination, determination, what a thing is for. The code declares the first estate's purpose and then, a few sections later, gives it a preferential claim to the offices of honour it has made itself fit for while reserving to the sovereign the judgement of fitness. That is a creed and a career structure in the same instrument.

Why did minting work here when it could not have worked on the villages? Because the audience was one the state had formed. The nobleman's son went into the cadet register at twelve and into the school at the King's own selection; from 1723 the educator of the Berlin cadets was a Halle-trained Pietist who went on to be a field preacher. A currency of legitimacy can be created rather than borrowed exactly to the extent that its issuer also controls the formation of the people who must honour it — and no other audience in this state was formed by it. That is why the manufactured robe was cut for the officer corps, and why the borrowed one was the only option in the parish.

It is also why this was the robe the apex defended last and most fiercely. The dynasty conceded on confession in 1653 and conceded again whenever the Lutheran estates pushed. It never conceded on the officer corps.

Robe III — toward Europe: protocol bought with troops, and philosophy bought with a reputation

The third audience could not be coerced and did not care what a Brandenburg villager believed. It was the courts, the chanceries and eventually the reading public of Europe, and toward it the Hohenzollerns ran two quite different operations a generation apart.

The first was pure protocol and the price is on the record. By the Crown Treaty of 16 November 1700 the Elector undertook to furnish the Emperor Leopold with eight thousand men for the coming war over the Spanish succession; in return the Emperor promised that his self-coronation as King *in* Prussia would be recognised across Europe and the Empire. The negotiations were largely handled by Charles Ancillon, himself a Huguenot refugee.

Every element of the ceremony that followed on 18 January 1701 is a solution to a problem. It took place at Königsberg, because the duchy of Prussia lay outside the Holy Roman Empire and a king could not be crowned inside it. The title was *in* Prussia and not *of* Prussia, because the western half of Prussia was Polish and the King of Poland had views. The King placed the crown on his own head and then on his wife's, and only afterwards went to the castle church to be anointed — the sequence deliberately inverted, so that the crown should be seen to come from himself and the sacred endorsement to follow rather than confer. And the anointing was performed by two clergy, Benjamin Ursinus von Bär for the Reformed and Bernhard von Sanden for the Lutherans, before something like four thousand guests: the confessional split of the state solved, for one afternoon, by doubling the officiants.

A crown purchased with a regiment, conferred by its wearer on himself, and blessed twice over by two churches that did not agree. It is a robe assembled entirely out of borrowed pieces and paid for in the one currency the house actually had.

The second operation was of another kind. Frederick II wrote in French, corresponded with Voltaire, refounded the Berlin Academy, and published, in 1740, the *Anti-Machiavel* — a refutation of *The Prince* arguing that a sovereign's first duty is justice and denouncing unleashed ambition and aggrandisement. In December of the same year he invaded Silesia.

The temptation is to call this hypocrisy and stop. The framework's instruction is to identify the audience and ask what was being bought, and the answer is available in the author's own words. In the preface he wrote in 1746 for his history of his own times — a document explicitly addressed to posterity and not to his contemporaries — he sets out his doctrine of treaties:

Vous verrez dans cet ouvrage des traités faits et rompus; et je dois vous dire, à ce sujet, que nous sommes subordonnés à nos moyens et à nos facultés : lorsque nos intérêts changent, il faut changer avec eux... mais un prince qui s'engage, ne se commet pas lui seul... il expose de grands États et de grandes provinces à mille malheurs : il vaut donc mieux, plutôt que le peuple périsse, que le souverain rompe son traité.

You will see in this work treaties made and broken; and I must tell you, on this subject, that we are subordinate to our means and our faculties: when our interests change, we must change with them... but a prince who binds himself does not commit himself alone... he exposes great states and great provinces to a thousand misfortunes: it is better therefore that the sovereign break his treaty than that the people perish.

He ends the same preface with a line that would be unbearable from anyone else: *L'histoire de la cupidité est l'école de la vertu : l'ambition fait des tyrans, la modération fait des sages* — the history of greed is the school of virtue; ambition makes tyrants, moderation makes wise men. Written by the man who had taken Silesia six years earlier, and meant.

And in the second preface, written in 1775 for the same work, he explains the management of the whole thing so plainly that it hardly needs a gloss:

La prudence empêche qu'on ne le détrompe, parce que ce serait le comble de la démence d'ébruiter soi-même, par vaine gloire, la partie faible de l'État : les ennemis, charmés d'une pareille découverte, ne manqueraient pas d'en profiter. La prudence exige donc qu'on abandonne au public la liberté de ses jugements téméraires, et que, ne pouvant se justifier pendant sa vie sans compromettre l'intérêt de l'État, l'on se contente de se légitimer aux yeux désintéressés de la postérité.

Prudence forbids undeceiving it, because it would be the height of madness to publish oneself, out of vainglory, the weak part of the state: enemies, delighted by such a discovery, would not fail to profit by it. Prudence therefore requires that the public be abandoned to the liberty of its rash judgements, and that, being unable to justify oneself during one's life without compromising the interest of the state, one be content to legitimate oneself in the disinterested eyes of posterity.

There is the whole information policy of an order, written down by the man running it. The public must be left to judge wrongly. Self-justification during a lifetime would expose the weak part of the state. Therefore the record is written for the dead — for readers who cannot act on it — and the living are managed.

What was the philosophical robe buying? The same thing the coronation bought: standing. A poor territory of three million people with an army of seventy-six thousand, a quarter of them foreigners, had seized a rich province from a great house and needed, at every court in Europe, to be something other than a bandit with a good drill-master. What it offered instead was the Solomon of the North: the king who wrote in French, corresponded with the philosophers, tolerated all religions, and recalled the philosopher his father had exiled. It worked, and the fact that it also happened to be, in most particulars, what he actually believed is precisely what made it work.

Robe IV — toward the useful stranger

The fourth audience was the incomer, and the doctrine cut for it is the one modern readers know best and misread most.

Two marginal notes survive from Frederick II's first weeks on the throne, in his own spelling, scrawled on official reports. The first, from 15 June 1740, on a report about a Catholic seeking citizenship at Frankfurt:

alle Religionen Seindt gleich und guht wan nuhr die leüte so sie profesiren Erliche leüte seindt, und wen Türken und Heiden kähmen und wolten das Land Pöpliren, so wollen wier sie Mosqueen und Kirchen bauen.

All religions are equal and good, if only the people who profess them are honest people; and if Turks and heathens came and wanted to populate the land, then we would build them mosques and churches.

The second, a week later, in the margin of a report from the spiritual department about the Catholic schools his father had set up for the children of Catholic soldiers, and about proselytising:

Die Religionen Müsen alle Tolleriret werden und Mus der fiscal nuhr das auge darauf haben, das keine der andern abruch Tue, den hier mus ein jeder nach Seiner Fasson Selich werden.

The religions must all be tolerated, and the fiscal must only have an eye to it that none does harm to another, for here everyone must be saved after his own fashion.

The second sentence has been quoted for two and a half centuries as the founding charter of religious liberty in Germany, and it is not nothing: the corollary — that the state's officer's job is to prevent the confessions injuring one another rather than to enforce one of them — is a real and consequential position, and it was acted on. But look at what each note is written on. The first is about a man who wants to settle, and

its operative clause is not the equality of religions but *das Land Pöpliren*, to populate the land. The second is about schools for soldiers' children.

The doctrine of toleration in Prussia is genuine and it is an instrument, and the module's finding is that one should not choose between those readings. What one should do instead is find the register the tolerated are being entered on. In this state, in these years, there were two: the tax roll and the canton roll. The Edict of Potsdam of 1685, which brought in the Huguenots after Louis XIV revoked the toleration they had held in France, was an act of Protestant solidarity that impressed the whole Reformed world and it was a recruitment drive for skilled artisans into a country the war had emptied. Some twenty thousand came. Both descriptions are true and neither is a debunking of the other.

It is worth adding what the toleration did not extend to, since a boundary tells you what a doctrine is for. The recess of 1653, in the article immediately after the confessional guarantee, refuses public or private exercise of religion to Catholics, Arians, Photinians, Weigelians, Anabaptists and Mennonites in the Mark, and confines Jews to the public fairs, with no fixed domiciles and no synagogues. The 1667 testament instructs the heir to watch that Catholics do not creep back into Brandenburg and Pomerania, while conceding that in Prussia they have public exercise by treaty and must be left it, and that in the Cleves lands their rights rest on instruments the house is bound to honour because those same instruments are what made the estates accept the Hohenzollerns as hereditary lords in the first place. The tolerations that were honoured were the ones written into a treaty, a recess or a reversal — that is, the ones that had been paid for.

How the trusted-information leg was acquired

Set the four robes side by side and the provenance question answers itself in three different ways at once, which is itself the finding.

Toward the Lutheran base the leg was **redirected**: the existing channel of trusted authority — the parish clergyman, believed for reasons nobody in Berlin had earned — was left in place, and the state got behind it by capturing the institution that trained and certified him. Cheap, slow, and almost invisible, because nothing anybody in a village could see had changed.

Toward Europe it was **purchased**: eight thousand men for a title, and a lifetime of French prose for a standing among the powers. Legitimacy here was not borrowed from a currency the audience honoured so much as bought from a party who had it to sell, which is the specific move available to a state that has soldiers and no pedigree.

Toward its own coordinating class it was **forged**, in the framework's sense: an order of chivalry, a motto and a national name manufactured outright and imposed on an audience formed for the purpose. This is the expensive option and it usually fails, because a throne you build yourself is a throne nobody kneels to. It did not fail here, and the reason is the module's central structural claim: the audience was the one population in the monarchy whose formation the state controlled from the age of twelve.

As to whether the doctrine was held as tested or as revealed, this order is an unusually clear case of the first, and the evidence is behavioural rather than declared. Wolff expelled in 1723 and recalled in 1740; Pietism favoured under two kings and abruptly out of favour under the third; the Catholic exercise permitted in Prussia and forbidden in Brandenburg by the same ruler in the same document, on the express ground that the first was covered by treaty and the second was not. A doctrine whose application varies by province according to what was signed is not a revelation; it is an administration.

The one place the framework's sincerity test bites hardest is Frederick William I, who was personally and painfully devout, whose Pietism was not a policy he adopted but a conviction that visibly cost him, and who nonetheless built the instrument of clerical training that made his father's confessional problem manageable. The apex here was not a cynic operating a machine. It was a believer who happened also to be a competent administrator of other people's belief, and the framework's insistence that these are not in tension is worth restating: origin and function are separate questions, and a man may propagate in good faith a thing that is also, and quite independently, useful to him.

Reading the robe against the framework

Four contributions.

Where an apex cannot convert a population, the cheap move is to capture the training of its interpreters. The Hohenzollerns were a Calvinist house over a Lutheran country and stayed one for two centuries. They tried conversion once, in 1613 to 1615, and were beaten. What worked instead was the ordinance of 1729 requiring every theologian seeking a Prussian appointment to study two years at Halle. Not one article of the Augsburg Confession was altered. **The diagnostic for this move is a residence or certification requirement buried in a law about appointments, not a change in any creed** — and a study looking for confessional politics in confessional documents will miss it entirely. Two features make it worth naming as a family in its own right: it is invisible from below, because nothing the

congregation can see has changed, and it delivers the interpreter's *other* functions along with his sermon, which in this case meant the man who kept the parish register that assigned the village's boys to a regiment.

An apex can mint a currency of legitimacy exactly to the extent that it controls the formation of the audience that must honour it. The framework's rule is that legitimacy is borrowed and never minted, and that a forged apex carries no warrant. Prussia does not break the rule; it locates the exception. Toward the villages the dynasty borrowed, because it had to. Toward Europe it purchased. Toward its own officers it manufactured — an order of chivalry founded the day before the crown it was meant to dignify, a Latin motto, and a national name propagated deliberately by the sovereign, who says so in writing. That worked because the officer corps was the one audience the state itself had formed, entered on a register at twelve and schooled at the King's selection. **Restate the rule as: minting succeeds only where issuer and formative institution are the same body — which is why the manufactured robe, when you find one, is nearly always cut for the coordinating class and nearly never for the ruled.**

Read the final clause. The proposition that a cheap robe laid over a population that already holds a dense morality is a re-termination rather than a creed is confirmed here in the sharpest available form, and the case adds a rule for the toleration doctrines that so often accompany it. *All religions are equal and good, if only the people who profess them are honest people, and if Turks and heathens came and wanted to populate the land, then we would build them mosques and churches.* The content is a genuine liberal position and was acted on. The final clause names the beneficiary and the purpose. The famous companion maxim, that everyone must be saved after his own fashion, was written in the margin of a file about schools for the children of Catholic soldiers. **Where a doctrine of tolerance is both sincere and instrumental, do not choose between the readings — find the register the tolerated are entered on.** In this state there were two, the tax roll and the canton roll, and the doctrine's boundaries follow them precisely: honoured where a treaty or a recess had paid for it, withheld where nothing had.

A ruler writing for posterity is describing his own seam, and will describe it accurately. The richest single statement of this order's information policy is not a censorship ordinance but a preface: prudence forbids undeceiving the public, because publishing the weak part of the state would be madness and the enemy would profit; therefore the public is abandoned to the liberty of its rash judgements, and the sovereign settles for being legitimated in the disinterested eyes of posterity. A private testament that instructs an heir to prefer Reformed candidates over Lutherans, written

by the same hand that had publicly sealed a promise of preferment without regard to religion, does the same work. **The documents addressed to audiences that cannot act — heirs, successors, the unborn — are where an order explains the management of the audiences that can,** and a study hunting for the gap between what was said and what was done should go to the testaments and the posthumous histories first. The 1667 paper closes by noting that its author copied it out from his own draft, which he thereupon immediately burned. That is not a detail. It is a man telling you which of his two statements he expected to survive.

A note on sources. German and French primary quotations are given exactly, in the original orthography, and are in the public domain. The confessional articles of the Brandenburg recess of 26 July 1653 are quoted from the text printed in Mylius's *Corpus Constitutionum Marchicarum* as reproduced by *German History in Documents and Images*. The political testament of 19 May 1667 is quoted from the archival text (Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, BPH, Urk. III.1, Nr. 18) printed in Richard Dietrich's edition and reproduced by the same project. The 1794 clause on the nobility's *Bestimmung* is from the *Allgemeines Landrecht*. The two marginal notes of Frederick II are from Max Lehmann, *Preussen und die katholische Kirche seit 1640*, part 2 (Leipzig, 1881), pp. 3–4, where they are given as rulings on immediate reports of 15 June and 22 June 1740; some sources date the second to 22 May, and I have not been able to resolve the discrepancy. The two prefaces to the *Histoire de mon temps*, of 1746 and 1775, are quoted from the Trier digital edition of the *Œuvres de Frédéric le Grand*. Translations are my own and deliberately literal.

One quotation is flagged rather than warranted. The passage from Frederick II's political testament of 1752 on spreading the name of "Prussian" is quoted from the published English translation reproduced by *German History in Documents and Images*; Frederick wrote in French and I have not checked it against the original, so it should be read as a translation. I also looked for, and did not find in a source I could verify, the frequently quoted line from the *Histoire de mon temps* in which Frederick names ambition and the desire to be talked about among his motives for the Silesian invasion. It may well be authentic; I have left it out rather than reproduce it on the strength of anthologies.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited. The argument that Halle Pietism supplied the working ideology of Frederick William I's state, and that Francke's educational techniques were used to instil loyalty to crown and state in the army and the new bureaucracy, is associated above all with Richard Gawthrop, building on earlier German work; it is contested in its strong form and I have used the narrower institutional claim, which the 1729 ordinance and the appointment records support on

their own. The account of the 1613 conversion and the Berlin disturbances of 1615 follows the standard narratives; readers should know that the scale and character of the 1615 unrest are variously reported.

Two limitations. First, this module treats the robe as it was addressed to Lutherans, to the nobility, to Europe and to incomers, and says almost nothing about the Catholic populations of the western territories or, later, of the partition lands, which had a quite different relation to the Prussian state and cannot simply be assumed to fall under the toleration described here. Second, the figures that appear in passing — a population of about three million and an army of seventy-six thousand at Frederick II's accession, of whom he reckons about twenty-six thousand foreigners, and state revenues of seven million four hundred thousand écus — are Frederick's own, from the opening chapter of the *Histoire de mon temps*, and are therefore a ruler's account of his own inheritance rather than an independent audit. They are quoted because they are his, not because they are verified.

QUIET, FAITHFUL, OBEDIENT, PEACEABLE

Formation: four populations, four casts of authority, and a state that never wrote a curriculum because it discovered it only had to license the man standing in front of the child

What is actually at stake

The thing being fought over in this module is not literacy and not propaganda. It is the cast of authorities a person will believe without checking.

No one verifies more than a sliver of what he must believe in order to live, and the sliver shrinks as a society grows. Everything else is taken on trust from people the believer cannot audit, and the mind selects whom to trust by reading cues — the mark of office, the agreement of the community around him, the sense that a thing is sacred and not to be traded, the story he absorbed before he could weigh it. Those cues were honest in a band of fifty people, where the man with the standing had earned it in front of everybody. At the scale of a kingdom they come apart from the competence they once certified, and once they can come apart they can be pulled apart on purpose. Which is why the fight over who forms the child is never a side issue in the history of an order. To form a child is to install, before the scepticism that would screen it has matured, the list of people whose word he will take: who his natural superiors are, which voice is a legitimate source, what is beyond argument, and where he himself stands in the arrangement.

Two consequences govern everything in this module. The first is that there is no such thing as an unformed person. A population a state declines to form is not a blank; it is a population still being formed by whatever was forming it before, whose cast of authorities simply remains in place and unchallenged. The second is that formation is far cheaper to inherit than to build, because the hard part — earning the trust in the first place — has already been done by somebody else.

Brandenburg-Prussia ran, over the eighteenth century, four distinct formations at once, producing four different casts of authority in four populations of the same state. The question this module answers is not whether the Prussians formed their people, which they conspicuously did, but *whom each population was taught to believe*, and how a poor administration in a poor country managed it at a price it could afford.

The village: the creed the state did not have to write

Start with the peasantry, because it is where the finding is sharpest and where the standard account of Prussian schooling most badly misleads.

On 28 September 1717 Frederick William I issued the edict on school attendance: children were to go to school from their fifth to their twelfth year, and were not to be released until they could read and write and had learnt the catechism by heart. It is routinely called the first compulsory-schooling law in Europe, and it is often read as a state seizing the education of its people.

Look at what it actually requires. It requires that the child learn a book, and the book is not a Prussian book. It is Luther's Small Catechism, written in 1529, two centuries before there was a Kingdom of Prussia and a century before the Hohenzollerns had a standing army. And in that catechism, appended at the end as the *Haustafel*, the table of duties for every station in life, there is a section on authority which the child was required to know by heart:

Jedermann sei untertan der Obrigkeit, die Gewalt über ihn hat. Denn es ist keine Obrigkeit ohne von Gott; wo aber Obrigkeit ist, die ist von Gott verordnet. Wer sich nun wider die Obrigkeit setzt, der widerstrebet Gottes Ordnung; die aber widerstreben, werden über sich ein Urteil empfangen... Denn sie trägt das Schwert nicht umsonst; sie ist Gottes Dienerin, eine Rächerin zur Strafe über den, der Böses tut.

Let everyone be subject to the authority that has power over him. For there is no authority except from God; and where authority is, it is ordained by God. Whoever therefore sets himself against the authority resists God's ordinance; and those who resist shall receive judgement upon themselves... For it does not bear the sword in vain; it is God's servant, an avenger for punishment upon him that does evil.

And the section immediately following, addressed to the subjects themselves:

Gebet dem Kaiser, was des Kaisers ist, und Gott, was Gottes ist!... So seid nun aus Not untertan, nicht allein um der Strafe willen, sondern auch um des Gewissens willen. Derhalben müsset ihr auch Schoß geben; denn sie sind Gottes Diener... So gebet nun jedermann, was ihr schuldig seid: Schoß, dem der Schoß gebührt, Zoll, dem der Zoll gebührt, Furcht, dem die Furcht gebührt, Ehre, dem die Ehre gebührt.

Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's... So be subject of necessity, not only for punishment's sake but for conscience's sake. Therefore must you also pay tax; for they are God's servants...

Render therefore to every man what you owe: tax to whom tax is due, toll to whom toll is due, fear to whom fear is due, honour to whom honour is due.

Tax, toll, fear and honour. That is a fiscal schedule and a deference schedule in one paragraph, memorised by every child in the monarchy between the ages of five and twelve, and no Prussian official had to compose a line of it.

Luther had told the pastors, in his own preface, exactly what the instruction was for and what it was to produce:

das vierte Gebot mußt du bei den Kindern und gemeinem Mann wohl treiben, daß sie still, treu, gehorsam, friedsam seien.
The fourth commandment you must drive hard among the children and the common man, that they may be quiet, faithful, obedient, peaceable.

There is the portrait of the good subject, written in 1529, and it did not need revising in 1717.

The decisive feature of the passage, for a state inheriting it, is that its central term is a variable. *Die Obrigkeit* — the authority — is nowhere specified. The text does not say which authority, or how it is constituted, or by what title it holds. It says only that whatever authority in fact has power over you is ordained by God and bears the sword rightfully. A creed containing an unfilled authority-variable is an extraordinary asset to any order that arrives afterwards, because the order does not have to argue itself into the sacred; it simply becomes the value of a term the population was already taught to obey. This is why the content of what Prussian villagers were taught barely moved across two centuries while everything about where the obedience terminated moved entirely.

What the state actually did: it licensed the transmitter

If the doctrine did not have to change, what was left to do? The answer is the whole administrative history of Prussian formation, and it is the same move performed five times.

The man who taught the child was, in the ordinary Prussian village, the *Küster* — the parish sexton, the pastor's subordinate, keeping the church and leading the singing and holding a winter school in a room when the fields allowed. The building was the church's, the book was the church's, the calendar was the church's, and the trust the villager placed in the man was trust earned by the parish over generations, at nobody in Berlin's expense.

The Prussian state did not replace him. It required him to be certified. The *General-Landschul-Reglement* of 12 August 1763, drafted by Johann Julius Hecker — a Halle-formed Pietist who had been preacher and school inspector at the Potsdam military orphanage, had founded a practical school in Berlin in the later 1740s and the first Prussian teachers' seminary shortly after — sets the requirement out with complete clarity:

daß keine zu Schulmeister und Küster angenommen werden sollen, als welche in dem Chur-Märckischen Küster- und Schul-Seminarium zu Berlin eine zeitlang gewesen, und darinnen den Seiden-Bau sowohl, als die vortheilhaften bey den deutschen Schulen der Dreyfaltigkeits-Kirche eingeführte Methode des Schulhaltens gefasset haben.

That none shall be accepted as schoolmaster and sexton but such as have spent a time in the Kurmark Sexton- and School-Seminary at Berlin, and have there taken in both silk-culture and the advantageous method of school-keeping introduced in the German schools of the Trinity Church.

And then the licence itself, in the next clause: Hecker having been charged to supply the crown's land schools with good subjects from the seminary, such men take up their posts when they present, from Hecker, a *Zeugniß der Tüchtigkeit* — a certificate of fitness — to the royal War and Domains Chamber, in order to obtain their regular call.

Read that chain again, because every link is load-bearing and none of them is a curriculum. The village schoolmaster is trained in an institution founded by a Pietist. He is certified fit by that Pietist personally. He presents the certificate to the body that raises the army's money and administers the crown's estates. Only then does he get the parish's call. The church keeps the building, the book and the office; the state keeps the gate.

The same move had been made a generation earlier at the level above. In 1729 Frederick William I decreed that any theologian seeking appointment in Prussia must first study for two years at Halle — leaving the Augsburg Confession untouched and taking the certification of the men who would preach it. It would be made again in 1788 for the learned professions, and again in 1810 when the state introduced certification requirements for teachers. Five times across a century, in five different systems, the Prussian state did not write what was taught and did not forbid what was taught. It inserted a licence between the teacher and the child.

The reason this was the move available is simple and worth stating plainly: it is what a poor administration can afford. Composing a doctrine is expensive and usually fails, because a manufactured authority carries no warrant with a population that did not grant it. Suppressing an incumbent doctrine is more expensive still and tends to

produce martyrs. Certifying the man who delivers it costs one seminary, one examination and one clerk, and is entirely invisible from the pew, because from the pew nothing has changed: the same office, the same words, the same building, the same book.

What the licensing purchased is best seen in the quality of the men it eventually put in the room. Frederick II, later in the reign, hit on the expedient of installing invalid soldiers as village schoolmasters, the sole condition being that they could read and write. The Prussian village school of the eighteenth century was very often a crippled veteran in a cold room drilling the catechism into children who came when the harvest spared them, and the enforcement of attendance was patchy to the point of fiction in many districts. The system was not impressive. It did not need to be. It only had to deliver one book and one chain of authority to a child under twelve, and it had the parish's earned trust doing the work of persuasion for it.

The calendar: one office, one register, a whole life

The field of study asks what the ritual year installed. In this case the more revealing frame is the life, because the Prussian village compressed the whole apparatus into a single office and a single set of books.

The pastor baptised the child and entered his name in the church book. The sexton, licensed by the state and certified by a Pietist, taught him from five to twelve, and would not release him until he had the catechism by heart — a text which told him, among the first things he ever memorised, that the authority over him was ordained by God and that he owed it tax, toll, fear and honour. At about sixteen the same pastor confirmed him, and it was the parish clergyman who was required to list every male in his parish from the church books, so that confirmation was also the moment the boy's name was entered on the roll of the regiment whose canton his village lay in. At about twenty he was called for his months of drill and went home again on furlough. When he married he needed his lord's permission, and the pastor performed the ceremony and recorded it. When he died, the same man buried him and closed the entry.

One office. One set of registers. The sacrament, the schooling, the oath, the muster, the marriage and the grave.

This is why the arrangement was cheap, and it is the best illustration in the collection of why the components of formation are so hard to resist when they arrive together. The authority that taught the boy his creed was also the head of his religious community, so doubting it was disloyalty as well as error. The creed was sacred, so the obedience clause inside it was not a proposition to be weighed but a thing not to be questioned. It came as the story of God and the world, absorbed at five. And the man

who delivered all of it also held the book with the boy's name in it. Separately, any of these can be resisted by an adult. Delivered together by one trusted man across a whole life, beginning before the child could refuse, they are not resisted, and the resistance is not absent because the villager was stupid. His scepticism was working exactly as designed, reading a set of cues each of which it was built to trust, all pointing the same way.

The noble boy: the one formation the state built itself

Against all of that, set the treatment of the population the crown could not afford to have wrong.

In September 1717 — the same year as the school edict, and eight months after the King had bought out the nobility's ancient obligation to furnish a mounted man — Frederick William I founded the cadet corps in Berlin. Registers were compiled of the noble boys of the monarchy between twelve and eighteen. The King selected from the lists personally. The established nobility resisted, and he overrode them.

Everything about that is the opposite of the village arrangement. The state did not annex an existing institution; it built one. It did not license somebody else's transmitter; it took the child into its own building. It did not wait to be asked; it compiled a register and chose. And it did not delegate to a trusted local authority; the King read the names himself. From 1723 the educator of the Berlin cadets was a Halle-trained Pietist who went on to be a field preacher, which tells you that the crown was applying the same intellectual resource at both ends of society — but in the village it applied it through a certificate, and here it applied it in a school of its own with the King's hand on the intake.

What was installed there was a cast with exactly two names in it: the King and the regiment. And it was installed on top of a family already stripped of the alternatives, since the same decade had ended the tenure by which a nobleman held land for service and replaced it with a career the crown granted and could revoke. The boy entered at twelve, before the age at which anyone screens what he is told; he wore a uniform, which is a public and identity-fusing act; he swore an oath; and by the time he was old enough to weigh the arrangement his entire life and his family's standing had been built on it, so that reconsidering it would have been a kind of self-demolition rather than a change of mind.

That is why the manufactured honours of this order worked on this audience and could not have worked on any other. A motto minted in 1701 and an order of chivalry founded the day before the crown it decorated have no purchase on a population that did not receive them in childhood from someone it already trusted. On a cadet who

entered the King's register at twelve they had every purchase, because the state was itself the trusted authority that installed them.

The burgher: a certificate, and a third cast

The third formation is the one the Prussian state seems least to have intended and could least command, and it grew out of the same licensing habit.

The towns had Latin schools of their own, old and municipal and often good. On 23 December 1788 a regulation for examination at the learned schools introduced what became the *Abitur*, written and oral, testing the ancient and modern languages and historical knowledge. Its own text is scrupulous about what it is not doing: it did not intend, it says, to restrict civil freedom so far that a father or guardian should no longer be free to send even an immature and ignorant youth to the university. The certificate was made compulsory only for public stipends and privileges. It certified; it did not command. Only in 1812, under Humboldt's reorganisation, was it specified in detail, and only in 1834 did it become the required condition of university study.

The pattern is identical to the village and the parish: leave the institution standing, insert a licence, and let the licence become the gate over two or three generations. The result, though, was different in kind, because of what the certificate opened onto. The *Abitur* led to the university, the university to the learned professions and the higher civil service, and the university that came to define the type — Berlin, founded in 1809 and opened in 1810 with two hundred and fifty-six students and fifty-two lecturers — was organised around a principle that has no equivalent in a catechism or a parade ground: that teaching and research belong together, that the student chooses his course, and that knowledge is to be established by reason and evidence rather than by authority, tradition or dogma.

Whatever else that produced, it produced a cast of authorities with new names in it. The educated Prussian burgher of the nineteenth century trusted the professor, the examination and the printed argument. His authorities were credentialled rather than ordained, and they were, in principle, checkable — the whole point of the arrangement being that a claim stands or falls on evidence anyone qualified may re-examine. That is a different kind of trust from the villager's and a different kind from the cadet's, and a state that manufactures it acquires an interpreter class it has certified but not commanded.

This module stops before the consequences, which belong to the account of what happened when this state met its own educated men. But the structural fact belongs here: by the end of the period, the Prussian monarchy had formed three of its

populations in three incompatible directions, and only one of the three casts had the King in it at the top.

Where the state did not reach

Two honest limits, and they carry the module's most important negative finding.

The first is enforcement. Compulsory attendance was decreed in 1717 and again in 1763 and was not achieved for a century. Village schools were closed for the harvest; parents kept children home; the sanctions in the 1763 regulation existed because the obligation was not being met. What the Prussian state possessed in the eighteenth century was not a machine that formed every child but a legal claim on every child, an inspectorate that was the local clergy, and a certificate on the man in the room. The claim mattered more than the delivery, because it established, generations before it could be enforced, that the child's formation was the state's business.

The second is the populations the arrangement was not built for. The kingdom acquired, in the partitions of Poland from 1772 onward, large Polish-speaking and Catholic populations, and after 1815 a Catholic Rhineland, for whom none of the machinery described above applied: there was no Lutheran parish to license, no Halle-certified pastor, no catechism whose obedience clause the Hohenzollerns could quietly become the referent of. Those populations lie outside this module's period and I will not pretend to have researched them here. But the structural prediction is worth stating in advance rather than discovering late, because the framework makes it unambiguously: those populations were not thereby left unformed. They continued to be formed by the institutions already forming them — the Catholic parish, the religious orders, the household and the language — and their cast of authorities continued to have a bishop in it and not a king. A state that declines, or is unable, to form a population does not produce a blank on which it may later write. It produces a population formed by somebody else, and the somebody else has a century's head start.

And this yields the correction that most needed making in this study. It is tempting, reading the colonial cases where a conqueror educated a handful of clerks and left everyone else alone, to describe the pattern as *formation withheld*. That is not quite the right name, and Prussia shows why. Nothing was withheld from the Prussian villager in the sense of being denied to him; he was compelled by statute to attend school from the age of five, and taught to read. What he was not given was a cast of authorities in which anyone like him appeared. He learnt to read in order to read the catechism; the catechism told him whom to obey; the man who taught him held the register that assigned him to a regiment. He was formed thoroughly, at public insistence, and formed to be quiet, faithful, obedient and peaceable.

Reading formation against the framework

Capture the transmitter, not the curriculum. This is the module's central finding and it holds across every one of this state's formations. Halle for the clergy in 1729; the Berlin seminary and the War and Domains Chamber's certificate for the village schoolmaster in 1763; the Abitur for the learned professions in 1788; state certification of teachers in 1810. Not one of these alters a doctrine, bans a book, or closes a school. Each inserts a licence between the child and the person who forms him. **The diagnostic for a captured formation system is therefore not a new catechism but a certification requirement in a law about appointments** — and a study that looks for the capture of belief in documents about belief will not find it, because it is in the personnel files. The move is available to a state with almost no money, because the expensive part of formation is earning the child's trust, and the incumbent institution has already done it.

Look, in an incumbent creed, for the clause whose referent is unspecified. Luther's table of duties instructs the child that *die Obrigkeit* — whatever authority in fact holds power over him — is ordained by God, bears the sword rightfully, and is owed tax, toll, fear and honour. It never says which. **A creed containing an unbound authority-variable can be inherited by any subsequent order at no doctrinal cost whatever**, because the order does not have to argue its way into the sacred; it becomes the value of a term the population was already formed to obey. This is a substantial refinement of the observation that a cheap robe over a densely moralised population is a re-termination rather than a creed: the re-termination is cheapest, and sometimes free, where the incumbent text left the terminal blank. Where it did not — where a creed names its rightful rulers and their line — expect the incoming order to face a far harder and more expensive problem.

Formation is never withheld; a cast is. There is no unformed person, and a population an order does not form is a population still held by its previous formation. But the sharper statement, which this case forces, is that even a thoroughly formed population can be formed into a cast that contains nobody like itself. The Prussian villager was compelled to school at five, taught to read, and examined on a text that told him whom to obey; the noble boy was entered on a register at twelve and taught that he was the state's defence. Both were formed exhaustively. **The question to ask of any population is therefore never whether it was formed but whom it was formed to believe without checking** — and the sharpest single test is whether anyone of that population appears anywhere in the cast at all.

Where one office spans a whole life, the components of formation cannot be separated, and that is where it is cheapest. The Prussian parish clergyman baptised,

entered the name, oversaw the school, examined the catechism, confirmed, listed the boys for the regiment, licensed the marriage and buried the man. Authority, community, the sacred, the story and the timing all arrived through one trusted person, from before the child could refuse until after he was dead. **The way to find such an office is to ask who keeps the registers**, because the office that records a life is nearly always the office that forms it, and a state that acquires the second by licensing the first has bought the whole apparatus for the price of a seminary.

A state that certifies rather than commands eventually manufactures an interpreter class it does not control. The same licensing habit that annexed the parish school produced, at the top of the burgher formation, an examination leading to a university built on the principle that knowledge rests on reason and evidence rather than on authority. That is a cast of authorities constituted by checkability, and it is not the crown's cast. **Certification is the cheap way to capture an existing formation and the reliable way to create a rival one**, because a credential that can be earned creates an authority that answers to the standard rather than to the sovereign who instituted it — and the framework should expect that where an order licenses its way into control of a formation, the licence will in time produce claimants it did not intend.

A note on sources. German primary quotations are given exactly, in the original orthography, and are in the public domain. Luther's Small Catechism of 1529 is quoted from the standard German text of the *Haustafel* — the sections on authority and on subjects — and from the preface; the text is reproduced identically across several independent modern editions consulted, though spelling varies between them and I have followed the older forms. The *Königlich-Preußisches General-Land-Schul-Reglement* of 12 August 1763 is quoted from the text reproduced by *German History in Documents and Images*. The provisions of the 1788 examination regulation are quoted in translation from the German summaries of the *Reglement für die Prüfung an den Gelehrten Schulen* of 23 December 1788, not from the regulation itself, which I was not able to consult in full; that quotation should therefore be treated as a report of the text rather than as the text. Translations are my own and deliberately literal.

Dates and attributions. The school edict of Frederick William I is dated 28 September 1717 and the cadet corps to September of the same year. The 1763 regulation was drafted principally by Johann Julius Hecker, of the Halle Pietist tradition; the age range it specifies is given variously in the literature as five to thirteen and five to fourteen, and the regulation is generally held not to have imposed a duty *expressis verbis* but to have created one in effect through its provisions on sanctions and on the list of children who must be sent. The requirement that theologians seeking

Prussian appointment study two years at Halle is dated 1729. The University of Berlin was established by royal decree in August 1809 and opened in October 1810; the Abitur was specified in detail in 1812 and made a condition of university study in 1834.

Figures and claims I have deliberately left thin. I have not given numbers for village schools, literacy or attendance, because the figures circulating for eighteenth-century Prussia vary widely, rest on fragmentary visitation records, and are frequently reported without provenance; a claim that village schools in one region rose from a few hundred to well over a thousand between 1717 and 1740 appears in the literature but I could not trace it to a source I could check, and it is omitted rather than repeated. I also searched for, and did not find in a form I could verify, the frequently quoted remark of Frederick II to the effect that rural people need only a little reading and writing since if they know too much they will run off to the towns; it is consistent with everything else in the record and I have still left it out.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited. The account of what formation does — the reliance of every knower on testimony he cannot audit, the cue-reading by which trust is allocated, and the reason a formation installed before the screening faculty matures is defended in adulthood as the ground of the self rather than as a proposition — follows the collection's own theoretical statement of the problem, which rests in turn on work by Henrich on cumulative culture and social learning, by Sperber, Mercier and colleagues on epistemic vigilance, by Sloman, Fernbach, Rozenblit, Keil and Hardwig on the division of cognitive labour, and on the reinterpretation of the obedience experiments by Haslam and Reicher as engaged followership rather than blind compliance. The claim that Halle Pietism supplied the working ideology of Frederick William I's administration is Gawthrop's and is contested in its strong form; I have used only the institutional facts.

Two limitations, both serious. First, this module treats the Lutheran core provinces and says almost nothing, on the evidence, about the Catholic and Polish-speaking populations acquired from 1772; the prediction offered about them is a structural expectation and not a finding, and it must be tested against those sources rather than assumed. Second, the account of the burgher formation is the thinnest part of this study so far. It rests on the legislative landmarks rather than on any reconstruction of what was actually taught in a Gymnasium classroom or of how many families the route was in practice open to, and it should be read as a sketch of an institutional chain rather than as a description of a formation.

ONE THIRD OF THE ARABLE

The cost column: why five different common men complied, what compliance actually bought each of them, and the price the villager was charged when the arrangement was finally dissolved

The question, and why the usual answer is wrong here

Why does an ordinary man in this order get up and do what is required of him?

The lazy answer is fear, and for Prussia it is especially tempting, because the state's reputation is built out of gallows, gauntlets and drill. It is also, on the evidence, largely wrong — not because the violence was not real, but because a ledger has two columns, and an order that has to fill the whole of one of them with force is an expensive and brittle order. What a man weighs is what compliance gets him against what refusal costs him, from where he stands, with the doors he can actually see. Force sets the second figure. But the first figure is not nothing, and where an order manages to put something real in it, the force can stay in the barracks and be gestured at rather than used.

Prussia is worth the study precisely because its benefit column was not empty. The eastern villager who is the central figure of this module got something out of the arrangement — not much, and not what he would have chosen, but something concrete he could name and would have missed. He kept a farm. The crown protected that farm against his own lord. He could sue that lord in the King's courts, and he did, constantly, and sometimes won. And he had been taught from the age of five that the authority above him was ordained by God. That is a benefit column with four entries in it, and it explains his conduct better than the gauntlet does.

There is also no single common man here, and the module has to be run five times. The eastern villager, the soldier who was the same villager for three months of the year, the townsman behind his excise gate, the Polish-speaking subject of the partitions, and — at the extreme end, and almost entirely forgotten — the African sold by the Elector of Brandenburg's own trading company into the Caribbean. The five ledgers do not resemble one another, and the differences are the finding.

The eastern villager: what compliance bought

Start with the benefits, because they are the part the standard picture leaves out.

He kept the farm, and the crown helped him keep it. The single largest threat to a peasant household east of the Elbe was not the labour service but *Bauernlegen* — the absorption of the holding into the lord's demesne. Against that the crown was on his side, restrained it on its own domains, and tried repeatedly, with mixed success, to restrain it on noble estates. The motive was not tenderness and the King said so: a nobleman who converts a peasant holding diminishes the number of inhabitants and cultivators, which in plain terms means that an absorbed farm is a hearth struck off a regimental roll and a taxpayer struck off a list. But a protection is a protection to the man protected, whatever the reason, and this one was worth a very great deal to him.

Here is the structural point, and it is the module's first finding. The villager had two masters with divergent uses for his body. The lord wanted his labour on the demesne. The crown wanted his son in a regiment and his rye in the excise. Where two extractors bid for one population, the cheaper one will restrain the dearer, and the restraint arrives at the bottom looking exactly like a right. That is the largest single entry in this man's benefit column, and it cost the crown nothing it wanted.

He could go to law, and the law was not entirely a fiction. The great settlement of 1653 confirmed to the nobility the court of first instance over their own people — and in the same article granted the aggrieved subject not only appeal but the plea of nullity. Villagers used it. The estate records are full of litigation, and modern work on the Brandenburg villages finds a rural population that was assertive, well informed about its own charters, and frequently successful. What the same article did was price the attempt:

Wo ein Baur seine Herrschafft gegen hoffe beklagen, und seine Klage nicht gnugsamb ausführen würde, soll Er vermöge Unserer Cammergerichts reformation, mit dem Thurne gestraffet werden.

Where a peasant shall complain of his lordship at court, and shall not sufficiently make out his complaint, he shall, by virtue of Our Chamber Court's reformation, be punished with the tower.

A right of appeal with a prison term attached to failure is a strange instrument, and it is exactly what a sovereign builds who intends to be the final judge and cannot yet afford to be the first. From the villager's side, though, the arithmetic is simple and favourable: if he has a real grievance, well documented, with his neighbours behind him, he can go to Berlin over his lord's head. That possibility is worth more in a ledger than most historians of the period allow, because it converts an absolute lordship into a contestable one.

He was told the arrangement was right, by a man he trusted, before he could weigh it. He had learnt by heart, before the age of twelve, that whatever authority holds power over him is ordained by God, bears the sword rightfully, and is owed tax, toll, fear and honour. That is the benefit column being filled from the inside — not with goods but with the conviction that the goods are beside the point.

And labour was scarce. This is the mundane fact that does more work than any of the above. The east was underpopulated for the whole period, the war had emptied it, and a lord with an abandoned farm and nobody to work it was in a weak position, not a strong one. A cultivator who could not be replaced could bargain, and a good deal of what looks in the charters like servitude reads in the estate accounts like negotiation.

What refusal cost him

Now the other column, which is real and should not be softened.

He was subject to his lord's court in the first instance, and the lord had a magistrate's powers over him. He owed labour services which in the worst districts were crushing. His children owed compulsory service on the manor. He could be corporally punished. He could be relegated from the estate for a grave offence — though only, by the terms of the same 1653 settlement, on formal inquisition and judgment, and expulsion from the whole country required the King's own consent. And he could not leave. That is the hard floor of the whole arrangement and everything else rests on it.

Could he go anyway? Men did. They crossed into Poland, or into a neighbouring German territory, or into a town. What made flight a poor bet was not a police force, of which Prussia had almost none in the countryside, but the fact that everybody with an interest in him was cooperating. His lord could pursue him; neighbouring lords and states had every reason to return him, since they faced the same problem and made reciprocal arrangements about it; the town he ran to was walled and gated and had its own reasons not to shelter him; and the parish register that had his name in it existed everywhere he might go. The man he ran from and the men he ran to were in the same business.

But notice what this does *not* look like. There is no rural gendarmerie, no pass, no political police, no register of movement, no informer network. The apparatus that held the eastern villager in place was his lord, his pastor, his neighbours and a legal disability, and the King's soldiers were somewhere else entirely. The corridor between submission and insurrection was narrow, and it was held narrow by the fullness of the benefit column and the plausibility of the legal remedy, not by the frequency of force. Force was in the arrangement, visible, and almost never needed.

The soldier: the unfreedom that bought the furlough

The same man, from about twenty, spent part of each year in uniform, and here the ledger is at its most interesting because the two columns turn out to be the same column.

The cost of refusal was severe and everybody knew it. Desertion was a capital offence in every European army of the period, Prussia's included, and the characteristic punishment short of death was the gauntlet — the offender driven repeatedly between two ranks of his own comrades who were required to strike him, a punishment that broke bones, occasionally killed, and was designed as public spectacle. Nobody in a Prussian regiment was unaware of what happened to a man who ran.

Yet the record does not support the picture of an army held together only by that. The best modern archival study of Prussian desertion finds that peacetime desertion was treated by the administration as an ordinary running loss, of the same order as sickness — annual rates in the region of three per cent through the reign of Frederick William I — and that even after the bloodiest battles of the Seven Years' War the army never lost enough men through desertion to impair its capacity or will to keep fighting. Austrian archival work finds Prussian prisoners of war who declined opportunities to desert and spoke well of their king to their captors. Whatever was holding these men, terror alone does not account for it.

What was in the benefit column? Pay, standing in the village, and above all the furlough. The Prussian soldier was not taken away for life. He served a period of drill each year — commonly two or three months, after the harvest — and went home. That is what made an army of eighty thousand affordable in a country of two and a quarter million, and it is what made service survivable for the man doing it.

And now the fusion. The furlough only works if the man comes back, and the state's guarantee that he would come back was that there was a lord with legal power over him and a farm he could not abandon where he came from. His bondage was the collateral on his own leave. The villager's principal disability and his principal benefit were the same fact seen from two ends: he could not leave, and because he could not leave he was allowed to go home.

That is as tight a cost column as this collection has met, and it is tight in a way that has nothing to do with fear. A man cannot wish away the disability without losing the benefit that depends on it. He is not merely deterred from wanting the arrangement changed; he is placed where wanting it changed does not obviously serve him.

The townsman: the wall was a customs post

The urban common man had a different arrangement and it is worth a paragraph because it inverts several expectations.

From 1667 the towns paid the excise, a tax on consumption collected at the gate, and the consequence was physical: Prussian towns were enclosed and gated, and the enclosure was fiscal rather than defensive. Goods entering were assessed; the burgher's daily consumption was supervised in a way the villager's never was; and the town was administered by a royal officer, the tax councillor, standing over its own council. The countryside paid the contribution and was left alone between collections. The town paid at the gate, every day, and had a crown official in residence.

Against that: the burgher was not subject to a manorial court, could move, was not bound to any soil, and the sons of the wealthiest among them were exempt from the canton. He had the guild, which protected his trade against competition. And a well-off commoner could lease a crown domain — running a lordship, complete with its subjects and their labour obligations, as a tenant of the King, which was as close to noble standing as a burgher was permitted to come. The urban ledger is less coerced and more supervised, which is what one would expect of a population that pays in money rather than in bodies.

The absolute floor

There is a fifth common man in this state's record and he is almost never counted in it.

In 1682 the Great Elector chartered a trading company for the West African coast, on the proposal of his Dutch-born naval director. A fort was built on the Gold Coast in 1683 and named Groß Friedrichsburg; outposts followed, including one at Arguin, and an arrangement with the Danish crown gave the company the use of part of St Thomas in the Caribbean as a place to sell. The trade was in gold, ivory and human beings. Estimates of the number of Africans the company shipped across the Atlantic vary and the shipping records are incomplete, but the figures given in the scholarship run to something on the order of nineteen or twenty thousand people across roughly thirty voyages between the 1680s and about 1711, sold to planters in the Caribbean.

For that population the ledger has one column. There was no benefit. There was no court and no appeal, no protecting sovereign with a competing use for the body, no legal remedy that could be attempted at the price of a prison term, no parish, no catechism addressed to them, no furlough and no farm to go back to. There was no exit of any kind. This is what the cost column looks like when every door is shut and there

is nothing on the other side of the ledger at all, and it is the reason the framework holds that where exit is wholly foreclosed the extraction sinks toward the biological floor.

The company failed commercially. The last Brandenburg-Prussian director-general abandoned the Gold Coast in 1716, and the holdings were sold to the Dutch West India Company. The price, on the accounts that survive, was in the region of seven thousand ducats and twelve Africans.

Twelve human beings as part of the purchase price of the liquidation. That figure belongs in a study of this state as squarely as the canton regulation does, and it is not an aside about a failed commercial venture. It is the same order, in the same decades, applying to a population over which it had no other claim the arithmetic it applied everywhere with the benefit column removed.

The exit that was finally granted, and what it cost

Now the ending, which is the module's centre, because the terms on which an arrangement is dissolved reveal what it was worth to each party far more exactly than the terms on which it ran.

After the catastrophe of 1806 the Prussian state took its own settlement apart. The October Edict of 9 October 1807 opens with a sentence that dismantles in a clause what had taken two centuries to build:

Every inhabitant of our States is competent, without any limitation on the part of the State, to own or mortgage landed property of every kind. The noble may therefore own not only noble but also non-noble, citizen and peasant lands of every kind and the citizen and peasant may possess not only citizen, peasant and other non-noble, but also noble tracts of land, without in any case needing special permission for any acquisition whatever... All privileges which are possessed by noble over citizen inheritances are entirely abolished.

The land market is opened in both directions, and personal subjection was to end at Martinmas 1810. The prediction one would make from the structure of the settlement — that an arrangement whose boundary was attached to a class of parcel could be dismantled by a conveyancing statute without abolishing a single title — is what the document actually does.

But personal freedom is not a farm, and the villager's holding was not his. Making it his required compensating the man who had held the property right in it, and the Regulation Edict of 14 September 1811 set the price:

It is the general rule that the compensation should entail cession of one third of the arable fields and other farmland, meadows, pastures, and forests; at the same time, the parties involved are free to reach a compromise involving compensation in capital or rents paid in kind or cash.

A third of his land for a farm held on hereditary tenure. For the man whose tenure was not legally hereditary — however long his family had in fact been on it — one half.

Then the Declaration of 29 May 1816, passed under aristocratic pressure after the war, closed the door on the bottom of the village. Holdings that were not *spannfähig* — that had no draught team of their own — and were not entered in the provincial tax rolls as specifically peasant properties were excluded from regulation altogether. Their occupiers got no freehold. Their lords were authorised to go on drawing labour rents from them, or to buy them out, or to enclose them in the demesne.

Set the three documents in a row and the transaction is plain. The largest and middling peasants got freehold and kept perhaps two thirds or half of what they had worked. The smallest got nothing, remained liable to labour services, and could be bought out at their lord's convenience, which produced over the following decades a landless rural workforce. And the estate owners came out of the emancipation of their peasants with consolidated demesnes substantially enlarged by the ceded strips, freed of the obligations that had gone with lordship, and supplied with wage labourers who had nowhere else to go.

The villager, in other words, paid more to leave the arrangement than he had ever paid to stay in it. This is the answer to the question the module set out with, and it arrives from an unexpected direction: for a hundred and fifty years he complied because the arrangement, with all its indignity, contained real things he would have lost — and when it was finally dissolved he lost them anyway, and paid a third of his fields for the privilege.

It also explains something the framework wants explained, which is why the protection of the villager by the crown evaporated without anybody repealing it. It had never been a policy; it was the by-product of two extractors wanting different things from one body. After 1807 the crown wanted a land market and a taxpayer, the lord wanted labour and consolidated fields, and for the first time the two interests pointed the same way. When the bidders agree, the protection ends, and no instrument has to be revoked.

Could he leave? Emigration and the shape of the door

The last question is exit, and Prussia gives an unusually clean test of a proposition the collection has been carrying — that exit which remits is not exit at all but an instrument of the state, a way of collecting from a subject at a distance.

Prussia introduced freedom of emigration in 1818; from 1842 emigration again required official permission. And then the flow began, and it was enormous. Something over five million people left the German lands for the United States in the nineteenth century; roughly three million left between 1862 and 1890 alone; and the eastern provinces of Prussia supplied a heavy share of the later waves. A British royal commission examining the causes in the 1880s put low wages and lack of employment first, and named among the political factors the German government's posture toward the Social Democratic movement.

The character of that migration is the point. It was overwhelmingly a migration of families and of whole village chains, going to settle and not to earn and return, sustained by letters home that circulated in the German press and pulled the next cohort after them. It was not labour sojourning. The money did not, in the main, come back, and neither did the people.

So the proposition does not hold here, and the correct statement of the case is its mirror image. **Exit that does not remit is real exit** — the man is gone, the state gets nothing further from him, and his ledger has been settled by his walking away from it. What the state got instead was selection. Emigration on this scale removed, decade after decade, precisely the households whose reckoning had come out against staying: the land-hungry, the crowded-out artisan, the political dissident. An order losing its most dissatisfied subjects at a rate of a hundred thousand a year is an order whose remaining population grows steadily more compliant without anybody doing anything, and the safety valve costs the treasury nothing because the emigrant pays his own passage.

That is a benefit to the state of a wholly different kind from remittance, and it deserves its own name. A remitting diaspora is a revenue stream. A settling diaspora is a filter.

Two populations this module cannot properly reach

Honesty requires two gaps be named rather than papered over.

The first is the Polish-speaking population acquired in the partitions from 1772, and the Catholic Rhineland acquired in 1815. For these people almost none of the machinery described above applied: no Lutheran parish whose obedience clause the crown could quietly become the referent of, no shared language with the

administration, and, in the Polish case, a nobility of their own with its own claims. Their ledgers must have looked quite different and I have not researched them. What the framework predicts, and what should be tested rather than assumed, is that where the benefit column could not be filled — because the state could not offer these populations the protections, the offices or the story it offered its Lutheran core — the cost column had to be held high by visible means, and the visible means are the thing to go looking for.

The second is the industrial worker after about 1850, who is a genuinely new common man with a genuinely new ledger, and whose treatment belongs with the period in which he appears. It is worth flagging one thing about him in advance, because it bears on this module's central claim: the German state's eventual answer to him was not primarily repression but insurance — sickness, accident and old-age provision legislated in the 1880s. If that reading holds, it is the same move as the crown's protection of the eighteenth-century villager, performed deliberately rather than as a by-product: an apex filling a subject's benefit column because doing so is cheaper than filling his cost column.

Reading the cost column against the framework

The frequency of force measures the failure of the benefit column, not the strength of the cost column. The eastern Prussian villager was held in place for a century and a half with almost no visible coercive apparatus — no rural police, no pass, no political police, no surveillance — because the arrangement contained four things he could name and would have lost: a farm, a sovereign who protected it against his own lord, a court he could appeal to, and a creed that told him the whole thing was ordained. **Where you find an unfree population and cannot find the machinery holding it down, do not conclude the machinery is hidden; go and inventory the benefit column, because it will be fuller than the legal position suggests.** The corollary is the diagnostic: an order that must show force often is an order whose benefit column has emptied, and the visibility of the apparatus is the tell.

Two extractors bidding for one body produce something the body experiences as a right — and the right ends when the bidders agree. The Prussian crown's protection of peasant holdings was real, was worth a great deal to the peasant, and was motivated entirely by the fact that an absorbed farm was a hearth struck off a regimental roll. It survived as long as the crown wanted soldiers and taxpayers while the lord wanted labour and demesne. **The moment their interests converged — after 1807, when both wanted a land market — the protection vanished without a single instrument being repealed.** This is worth holding as a general expectation: a

subordinate population's most substantial protections are usually by-products of a disagreement among its superiors, and are therefore contingent on that disagreement continuing.

Look for the case where a subject's principal benefit is a function of his principal disability. The Prussian conscript went home for nine months of the year because there was a lord with legal power over him where he came from; the bondage was the collateral on the leave. **That is the tightest form a cost column takes, and it works without fear**, because the man cannot want the disability lifted without losing what depends on it. It also predicts what happens when the disability is lifted, which is that the benefit goes with it — and the framework should expect the beneficiaries of such arrangements to resist their own emancipation, not out of false consciousness but out of accurate arithmetic.

The terms of dissolution price the arrangement more honestly than the terms of operation. For a century and a half nobody could say what Prussian subjection was worth, because it was not for sale. In 1811 it was priced: a third of a man's arable for a hereditary tenure, a half for a non-hereditary one, and nothing at all for the poorest, who were excluded from the transaction and left to be absorbed. **When an order is dismantled, read the compensation schedule** — it states, in figures, what each party had actually been holding, and it is nearly always the most candid document the order produces.

Exit that does not remit is real exit, and its function for the state is selection rather than revenue. The proposition that exit which remits is an instrument of the state stands, but Prussia supplies its complement. Five million people left for a continent from which they did not return and to which they took their families; nothing came back. What the state received instead was the steady removal of exactly those households whose ledgers had come out against compliance, at no cost to the treasury, decade after decade. **A remitting diaspora is a revenue stream; a settling diaspora is a filter** — and an order with a large one is being quietly relieved of its own opposition by people who think they are escaping.

And, at the floor: the Brandenburg African Company's ledger is the control case this module needed and did not expect to find in a Prussian study. A population with no benefit column, no court, no competing extractor, no formation addressed to it and no exit whatever, held by force alone and liquidated for seven thousand ducats and twelve people. Every mitigation available to the Prussian villager — the second master, the appealable court, the scarce labour, the catechism — is absent, and what remains is the arithmetic with nothing subtracted from it.

A note on sources. The clause of the Brandenburg recess of 26 July 1653 on the punishment of unsuccessful peasant complaints is quoted in the original from the text printed in Mylius's *Corpus Constitutionum Marchicarum* as reproduced by *German History in Documents and Images*; the translation is my own. The October Edict of 9 October 1807, the Regulation Edict of 14 September 1811 and the Declaration of 29 May 1816 are quoted from the English texts reproduced by the same project; these are published translations and I have not checked them against the German originals, so they should be read as translations. The characterisation of the 1816 Declaration's effect — that holdings without their own draught team and not registered as peasant properties fell outside regulation, and that landlords were authorised to continue drawing labour rents from them, buy them out or enclose them — follows the editorial apparatus of that edition.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited. The finding that peacetime desertion in the Prussian army was administratively routine rather than a crisis, and that desertion in the field never impaired the army's capacity, is Jörg Muth's, from his archival study of desertion in the age of Frederick the Great; the observation that Prussian prisoners of war often declined to desert and spoke well of their king is Christopher Duffy's, from Austrian records. The picture of an assertive, litigious Brandenburg village population is William Hagen's. The reading of the manorial bond as the guarantee underwriting the canton furlough is Otto Büsch's. I have used the narrow institutional claims in each case and not the wider theses, which are contested.

Figures, all of which should be treated as orders of magnitude. Prussian army desertion is given in the literature at roughly three per cent a year for 1713–1740 and around six per cent of regimental strength annually in one regiment during the Seven Years' War; one campaign year, 1758, is reported at some sixteen thousand men out of about a hundred and fifty thousand. Emigration from the German lands to the United States across the nineteenth century is usually put at over five million, with about three million between 1862 and 1890. The numbers for the Brandenburg African Company are the least secure in this module and I have given them as a range: the scholarship reports something on the order of nineteen to twenty thousand Africans shipped across roughly thirty voyages between the 1680s and about 1711, and the sale price of the Gold Coast holdings to the Dutch West India Company as approximately seven thousand or seven thousand two hundred ducats together with twelve enslaved people. The date of that sale is given variously as 1717, 1718 and 1721 in different accounts, partly because the Gold Coast forts and Arguin went separately; the standard scholarly account has the last director-general abandoning the Gold Coast in 1716 and Arguin

taken by the French in 1721. Where accounts differ I have said so rather than picking one.

Two limitations, both stated in the body but repeated here because they are substantial. The Polish-speaking populations of the partition lands and the Catholic populations of the west are not researched in this module and the expectation offered about them is a structural prediction, not a finding. And the industrial worker of the second half of the nineteenth century is deferred rather than treated; the remark about social insurance as a benefit-column instrument is a flag for later work and not a conclusion.

THIRTY-FIVE THOUSAND HIDES

Extraction: three revenue streams and the single office that held all three, the land the nobility had kept off the books, the men who stood between payment in kind and payment in money — and where the whole of it went

Three streams and one office

A poor country with a large army has an arithmetic problem that shapes everything about how it is administered, and the Prussian solution can be stated in one sentence before it is unpacked: the crown drew on three quite separate revenue streams, taken from three different populations in three different media, and then — in a step that is the most revealing single act of administrative history in this study — put all three under one office whose title says what the state was for.

The first stream was rent. The Hohenzollerns were, by a wide margin, the largest landowner in their own country; something like a third of the land surface was crown domain, farmed by tenants under chambers of administration, and Frederick William I declared the domains indivisible and inalienable by ordinance of 13 August 1713 in the same decade in which he made his nobility's land fully alienable and then restricted who might buy it.

The second was the *Kontribution*, a land tax on the countryside, historically raised from peasant land and paid over by the lords who collected it.

The third was the *Akzise*, an excise on consumption introduced in the towns from 1667 and collected at the gate.

These began under different administrations. The domain revenues sat with a court chamber, later reorganised as a general finance directorate; the contribution and the excise were collected by the war commissariat, the body originally set up to raise and victual troops. And in January 1723 Frederick William I merged the two into a single authority whose name is the plainest statement of purpose this order ever produced: the *General-Ober-Finanz-Kriegs- und Domänen-Direktorium* — the General Superior Directory of Finance, War and Domains. Finance, war and domains, in that order, in one title, under one head.

That merger is not an efficiency measure and should not be read as one. It is a recognition. The crown's rent roll, its tax office and its war chest had never in practice been separable, because the rent existed to pay for the war and the war existed to hold

the ground the rent came from. When a state fuses its landlord's accounts with its army's supply administration, the resulting letterhead tells you more about the order than its constitution does.

The first stream: the crown as landlord

The framework has wanted a case in which the sovereign is also the country's principal proprietor, because it changes the character of everything he does about land, and Prussia supplies it in an unusually pure form.

The domain estates were not farmed by the crown directly. They were leased in parcels, on terms of years, to well-off commoners — general lessees who might employ sub-lessees under them, and who took each estate complete with its resident subjects and those subjects' labour obligations. A burgher could not own a lordship in Prussia. He could rent one from the King, with the peasants attached.

The revenue was very large and it grew. Domain income is reported to have risen from about 1.8 million *Reichstaler* in 1713 to about 3.3 million by 1740; and by 1739 the domain revenues came to nearly half of a total state income of something like seven million, contributing on their own close to a third of the entire military budget. A state financed on that scale by its own landed property is a state whose sovereign has a direct, immediate and self-interested view of the agrarian question — and it explains, better than any doctrine of paternalism, why the Prussian kings restrained the absorption of peasant holdings. In the private paper he wrote for his son in 1667 the Great Elector had put it without any ornament at all: do not give away peasants or waste hides, since your wealth in Prussia consists chiefly in retaining the many hides — *den wan man Die Hennen oder bunner vergibet, So werden Sie schwerlich Eier legen*, for when one gives away the hens they will hardly lay eggs.

The second stream: the land tax, and what the survey found

The contribution is where the settlement's arithmetic becomes visible, because it is where the question of who pays was actually fought out.

In Brandenburg and most of the older provinces, noble land was exempt. The great recess of 1653 had confirmed the prelates, lords and knighthood in their immunities, and Article 52 of that instrument goes further, freeing them from toll on the export of their own grain and rent-corn, wine, cattle and wool by land and water, and on the purchased victuals they brought back. The estate paid no land tax and shipped its rye duty-free. That was the settlement, and in the core provinces it held.

In East Prussia and Lithuania it did not. On a proposal from an East Prussian landowner, Count Truchsess zu Waldburg, Frederick William I issued a patent on 26 December 1716 replacing the tangle of provincial imposts with a single land tax assessed by the quality of the soil — the *General-Hufenschoss*, the general hide-tax. Commissions travelled the country from 1716 to 1719 valuing land and fixing rates; a cadastre followed in 1723. And the new assessment applied to noble land as well as to the holdings of the free Kulm tenants and the peasants.

The survey turned up something on the order of thirty-five thousand noble hides that had been concealed from taxation.

The nobility fought it hard. The knighthood of the provinces gave way one after another and with great reluctance; the Magdeburg knights appealed to the Imperial Aulic Council at Vienna and obtained a mandate declaring the change flatly contrary to the old German constitution and to rights the knighthood and estates had so dearly acquired, and warning that it would serve the coming total extirpation of the noble estate. In East Prussia there was fury at a mode of assessment said to place the nobility worse than the peasants and to ruin them. Count Dohna submitted a memorandum foretelling the ruin of the state.

On the margin of that memorandum the King wrote the sentence for which he is best remembered:

Nilil Kredo, aber das Kredo, daß die Junkers ihre Autorität Nie pos volam wird ruinirt werden. Ich stabilire die Souverainité wie einen Rocher von Bronze.

I believe nothing of it; but I do believe that the Junkers' authority — their never shall I permit it — will be ruined. I establish the sovereignty like a rock of bronze.

The most quoted line in Prussian history was written in the margin of a tax paper, against a nobleman's veto over a land survey. It belongs in the account of extraction rather than in the account of the army, and it is a reminder of where the real contest between a crown and its settlement partners is fought: not over doctrine or command, but over whether an assessor may enter a man's fields with a measuring rod.

Two qualifications keep the episode honest, and both are findings.

The first is the rate. After 1723 the average assessment ran, according to soil quality, at something like 2.6 taler per hide for the nobility, 3.2 for the Kulm freeholders and 2.8 for the peasants. The nobility now paid, which was the novelty and the reason for the fury; but it paid less per hide than the peasants working the same land. A privilege abolished in principle survived as a rate — which is the ordinary fate of such privileges and worth watching for wherever an exemption is formally ended.

The second is the geography. The general hide-tax was imposed in East Prussia and Lithuania, a peripheral province recently ravaged by plague and being rebuilt with the crown's money; the parallel land-tax regulations attempted in Pomerania and the Neumark went less well; and Frederick II later extended the East Prussian system to West Prussia and Silesia — that is, to territory he had just taken by conquest and partition, where no established immunity stood in the way. **The tax privilege held exactly where the founding bargain held.** Where the crown had bought the nobility's consent with confirmations, the confirmations bound it; where it arrived as a conqueror or a rebuilders, it assessed.

The third stream: the excise, and the wall around the town

The excise, introduced in the towns from 1667 and extended to larger places without town rights, taxed consumption at the point of sale and, in practice, at the point of entry. Its consequence was physical. Prussian towns were enclosed and gated, and by the eighteenth century the enclosure had ceased to be a fortification and become a customs perimeter: goods entering were assessed, the burgher's daily consumption was supervised in a way the villager's was not, and a royal tax councillor sat over the town's own council.

The split this produced runs through the whole fiscal history of the state. The countryside paid the contribution — a periodic assessment on land, collected through the lord, leaving the villager unsupervised between collections. The town paid the excise — daily, at the gate, in cash, under a resident officer of the crown. Two populations, two media, two entirely different experiences of being taxed, and a fiscal administration with no reason to consult either of them once it could reach the taxpayer directly.

The monopolies, and the place where the rate was found

Frederick II, needing money after the Seven Years' War had emptied the country, brought in a French tax administrator, de la Haye de Launay, in 1766 to reorganise the indirect taxes on the French model — the *Régie*, staffed substantially by Frenchmen. The principle was to tax luxuries and leave the food of the poor alone. The practice produced the most hated institution of the reign.

Coffee was the centre of it. The state took a monopoly on imports; import was banned in 1780; and in 1781 roasting was made a royal monopoly, permitted only under licence. Licences were granted to the nobility, the clergy and government officials, and refused to common people. Enforcement was given to a body of some

four hundred war invalids, paid out of the fines they generated, who patrolled the streets sniffing at doors and windows for the smell of illicit roasting, and whom the public called the *Kaffeeriecher*, the coffee-sniffers.

Now attend to what the monopoly actually did, because it is where this module's sharpest structural finding sits.

The framework carries a proposition that where an indirect tax becomes a state's principal revenue, the operative statute is the one abolishing the untaxed substitute — the rule that a consumption tax only bites when people cannot simply switch to something the tax does not reach. Prussia does the opposite, deliberately and on the record, and the inversion is instructive. The state did not abolish the substitute for coffee. It promoted it. Beer, malt and chicory were the officially favoured alternatives, and the protection of domestic malt and brewing was among the stated purposes of the whole exercise. The point of the coffee regime was not merely to raise a duty on coffee but to move the population's spending from an import — which drained silver abroad — to a domestic product.

And who produced the domestic product? Brewing and distilling on the land were, in this state, largely the privilege of the estate owners, whose right to their own produce and freedom from toll on it had been confirmed in the very instrument that founded the fiscal arrangement. The coffee regime was, among other things, a demand-management policy in favour of the class the crown had bargained with in 1653.

So the proposition needs restating rather than discarding. **Ask whether an indirect tax's substitute is abolished or protected, because the two cases mean opposite things.** A tax that abolishes its substitute is a revenue instrument: the state wants the money and closes the escape. A tax that protects its substitute is a redirection instrument: the state wants the spending moved, and the identity of whoever owns the substitute tells you whose revenue is actually being defended.

The coffee affair also supplies something this module needs and cases rarely provide: a datable point at which extraction crossed the threshold, and a record of what happened.

Nothing happened in the sense of a rising. What happened was evasion on a scale the administration could not process. Smuggling was general, roasting went on at night, the sniffers became the object of what a nineteenth-century historian of the reign called the bitterest popular hatred, and the volume of penalties for the illicit trade grew until the King, on de Launay's own recommendation, was obliged to reduce the levy.

That is how an order finds the edge. Not from a revolt, and not from any theory of what a population can bear, but from its own prosecution statistics — the count of

penalties rising until the enforcement cost exceeded the yield, and the rate coming down as an administrative concession that nobody announced as a defeat.

The medium, and the men who stood on the boundary

Follow the surplus through and it changes form twice, and the men standing at each change are the most reliable supporters this order had.

At the bottom it is taken in kind and in time. The villager owed labour services, and in the heaviest districts they were formidable: obligations recorded at ten labour-days a week meant not that one man worked ten days but that the holding had to supply more than one worker at once — two hands, five days a week, every week of the year, in addition to working its own land. He owed rent-corn. His children owed service on the manor. None of that is money.

At the top it is money, and money is what the state needs, because soldiers, fortresses, magazines and gunpowder cannot be paid for in rye. Somewhere in between the conversion happens, and there are two positions where it happens.

The first is the domain lessee. He contracts with the chamber to pay a fixed rent in cash for a term of years, and takes possession of an estate whose subjects render him labour and grain in kind. His obligation upward is denominated in money; his income is denominated in work and rye. The spread between the two is his business, and it is the whole of his business.

The second is the estate owner. He receives labour and grain in kind from his villagers, and sells the grain for cash — at Danzig or Stettin, into the Baltic trade, free of toll on his own produce by the express terms of the 1653 settlement. His profit is a function of the gap between what the labour costs him, which is nothing in cash, and what the rye fetches, which is a price set in Amsterdam.

Both men owe cash and collect in kind. Both therefore have an interest, entirely independent of any political opinion, in the arrangement that lets them collect in kind continuing exactly as it is. And both are precisely the people the order most needs to keep: one runs the crown's own estates, the other officers the crown's army.

The framework holds that monetisation moves rather than abolishes extraction in kind, and that whoever stands on the boundary between the two media captures the difference and becomes the order's most reliable support. Prussia confirms it twice over with named positions, and supplies the diagnostic: **look for the man who owes a fixed sum in money and collects a variable quantity in labour**. He is the load-bearing beneficiary, he will defend the arrangement without being asked, and no amount of his private grumbling about the crown will alter it, because the default requires alignment and not agreement.

Where it went

The distribution among the apex is the shortest part of this module because the answer is monotonous.

Under Frederick William I the military establishment consumed something in the region of two thirds of state expenditure. What was not spent was hoarded: at his death he left, on his son's own accounting, some eight million seven hundred thousand écus in the treasury, against annual state revenues of seven million four hundred thousand, no debts, well-administered finances, and — the same source adds, in the same breath — very little industry, with the balance of trade losing a million two hundred thousand écus a year abroad.

An army of seventy-six thousand, of whom the King reckoned about twenty-six thousand were foreigners, which he takes as proof that three million inhabitants could not have furnished even fifty thousand.

And then the sentence that closes the ledger. Writing of what the first Silesian war had bought him, Frederick recorded that the greatest advantage the King drew from the truce with the Austrians was to make his forces more formidable:

L'acquisition de la Silésie lui procura une augmentation de revenus de trois millions six cent mille écus. La plus grande partie de cet argent fut employée à l'augmentation de l'armée.

The acquisition of Silesia procured him an increase of revenues of three million six hundred thousand écus. The greater part of this money was employed in the enlargement of the army.

There is the whole circuit in two sentences, written by the man who ran it. The army takes a province; the province yields half again the state's original revenue; the revenue is spent on more army. Extraction here is not a system for funding a state that does other things. It is a loop, and the loop's output is the capacity to run the loop again on somebody else's territory.

The framework asks where an order's extraction sits relative to subsistence and what holds it there. For the Prussian villager the answer given elsewhere in this study is that the rate was held below the bone by a genuine benefit column and by two extractors competing for the same body. For the state as a whole, the answer this module adds is different and less comfortable: the ceiling on Prussian extraction was not what the population could bear but what the administration could reach, and every time the reach extended — a survey that found thirty-five thousand hidden hides, an excise wall around a town, a province annexed — the rate did not fall. The take rose to meet the new capacity, and the increment went to the army.

Reading extraction against the framework

When a state merges its fiscal and military administrations into one office, read the name of the office. In 1723 Prussia put its landlord's rent roll, its tax collection and its army's supply administration under a single directory of Finance, War and Domains. That is not a rationalisation; it is an admission that the three had never been distinct. **Where you find such a merger, the resulting title is usually the most candid statement of purpose the order ever makes** — plainer than its constitution, its coronation formula or its political testaments, because nobody thinks of a departmental letterhead as a piece of self-description.

A tax privilege's geography maps the geography of the founding bargain. Noble land in Brandenburg was exempt because the crown had bought the nobility's consent with confirmations in 1653 and the confirmations bound it. Noble land in East Prussia was assessed from 1716, in a plague-emptied province the crown was rebuilding with its own money; and Frederick II extended the same assessment to West Prussia and Silesia, which he had taken by conquest and partition. **Plot where an exemption holds and where it does not, and you have plotted where the order had to bargain and where it did not** — and the conquered periphery will be the part of a state that is most efficiently taxed, not the least.

A privilege abolished in principle survives as a rate. Even where the Prussian nobility was brought onto the tax rolls, it paid something like 2.6 taler per hide against the peasant's 2.8 on the same soil. **Do not stop at the statute that ends an immunity; find the schedule underneath it**, because that is where the surviving fraction of the old arrangement is kept, and a differential of a few per cent, compounded over a century across every estate in a province, is a substantial transfer that no document describes as one.

Ask whether an indirect tax's substitute was abolished or protected — the two mean opposite things. The proposition that a consumption tax's operative statute is the one closing the untaxed alternative holds where the state wants the money. Prussia's coffee regime did the reverse: it promoted beer, malt and chicory, because the substitute was domestically produced under privileges held largely by the class the crown had settled with. **A tax that abolishes its substitute is a revenue instrument; a tax that protects its substitute is a redirection instrument, and the owner of the substitute is the party whose revenue is really being defended.**

An order locates the revolt threshold from its own prosecution statistics, and the reduction of a rate is the admission. Frederick's coffee monopoly was not defeated by a rising. It was defeated by the sheer number of penalties for smuggling, which rose until enforcement cost more than the duty yielded, whereupon the King

reduced the levy on his own administrator's advice. **Where a rate comes down without a revolt, go and look for the enforcement figures that preceded it** — they are the record of an order discovering, empirically and expensively, where the edge of the possible actually lies. This is what "just enough" looks like from the inside: not a calculation, but a retreat.

Find the man who owes cash and collects labour. The domain lessee paid the chamber a fixed money rent and took his return in the work and rye of subjects who came with the lease; the estate owner took labour and grain from his villagers and sold the grain for money at the Baltic ports, toll-free by the terms of the settlement. Both stand where extraction changes medium, both capture the spread, and both are the people the order most depends on. **The diagnostic for a settlement's load-bearing beneficiary is a fixed obligation in money discharged out of a variable receipt in kind** — and once identified, that man's political conduct can be predicted without knowing a single thing about his opinions.

A note on sources. German primary quotations are given exactly and are in the public domain. Article 52 of the Brandenburg recess of 26 July 1653, on the knighthood's freedom from toll on its own produce, is quoted from the text printed in Mylius's *Corpus Constitutionum Marchicarum* as reproduced by *German History in Documents and Images*. The Great Elector's instruction about not giving away the hens is from the political testament of 19 May 1667, from the archival text printed in Richard Dietrich's edition. Frederick II's figures for the state at his accession, and the sentence on what Silesia yielded and where the money went, are from the *Histoire de mon temps*; the accession figures come from the Trier digital edition of the *Œuvres*, but the Silesia sentence I have only from the page-index of a nineteenth-century printed edition, which carries an obvious optical-recognition error in the numeral, and I have not been able to open the page itself. It should be treated as very probably his words and not as verified.

The marginal note of Frederick William I on Count Dohna's memorandum — *Ich stabilire die Souverainité wie einen Rocher von Bronze* — is quoted from a scholarly article on the administration of East Prussia which cites it to a published source; I have not seen the archival original, and readers should know that this is among the most frequently reproduced sentences in Prussian historiography and that its precise wording varies slightly between renderings. The mandate of the Imperial Aulic Council against the change of tenures is quoted from the older German biographical literature. Translations are my own.

Figures, all of which should be treated as orders of magnitude and several of which rest on single sources. Crown domain as roughly a third of the land surface; domain

income rising from about 1.8 to about 3.3 million *Reichstaler* between 1713 and 1740; domain revenue as nearly half of total state income of some seven million by 1739 and contributing close to a third of the military budget; military expenditure at around two thirds of state spending under Frederick William I; the general hide-tax rates after 1723 at about 2.6, 3.2 and 2.8 taler per hide for nobility, Kulm freeholders and peasants respectively; and the roughly thirty-five thousand noble hides found to have been concealed. The labour-service figure of ten days a week per holding, meaning multiple workers simultaneously, is from Henning's tables as cited in the comparative literature and describes the heavy end rather than the average. The coffee-sniffers are given at about four hundred war invalids employed between 1781 and 1787; de Launay's remuneration is reported at fifteen thousand taler a year plus a percentage of collections, from a source I would not rely on for anything load-bearing.

One quotation deliberately omitted. Frederick II's much-reproduced pronouncement of 1777 that it is disgusting to see how coffee consumption has increased among his subjects and that his people must drink beer, since His Majesty was brought up on beer and so were his ancestors and his officers, appears everywhere in English but I have not found a German text I could check, and its authenticity has been questioned. It is left out of the body of this module and mentioned here only so that a reader who expects to meet it knows why it is absent.

Two limitations. This module treats the eighteenth-century fiscal system and does not reach the customs union of the nineteenth century, the reform of the land tax, or the fiscal treatment of the partition provinces, all of which belong later. And the account of the *Régie* rests more heavily than I would like on the coffee episode, which is vivid and well documented but was a small part of the indirect-tax system; the tobacco monopoly, the salt regale and the ordinary excise schedules deserve the quantitative treatment I have not been able to give them here.

SO THAT FOREIGN MINISTERS CANNOT COMPLAIN

Information and suppression: the press freedom granted as a diplomatic instrument, the censorship law that measured danger in printer's sheets and said in its own text that it aimed at writings and never at persons, and the one external check this state could not shake off because it had written the covenant itself

The question worth asking first

An order does not manage all its audiences equally. It concentrates its effort where the recognition it needs is recognition it cannot compel, and the first thing to establish about any information regime is therefore not how severe it was but *whom it was for*.

The collection has met a case where the answer was startling: an Italian colonial administration that expended far more care on what other European powers thought of its conduct than on what its own settlers or subjects believed, because the audience it could not command was the one that mattered to it. The question here is whether Prussia does something similar, and the answer, for the eighteenth century at least, is that it does — and that it does it by an instrument nobody would guess from the outside, which is the grant of press freedom.

By the nineteenth century the answer has changed completely, and the second half of this module traces the change: an order that begins by managing foreigners and ends by seizing printing plates. What holds the two halves together is a single technical discovery, made surprisingly early and written into the law in so many words: that the efficient object of suppression is not the man but the pipe.

1740: a freedom granted so that complaints could not be made

Within weeks of his accession Frederick II gave the Berlin newspapers a licence that has been quoted ever since as the charter of Prussian press freedom. The document in which it was transmitted is far more interesting than the phrase extracted from it, and it is worth reading whole. Cabinet minister Count Podewils wrote to his colleague Thulemeier on 5 June 1740:

Sr. Königl. Mayestät haben mir nach aufgehobener Taffel allergnädigst befohlen... zu eröffnen, daß dem hiesigen Berlinschen Zeitungs Schreiber eine unumschränkte Freyheit gelassen werden soll in dem articul von Berlin von demjenigen was anizo hieselbst vorgehet zu schreiben was er will, ohne daß solches censiret werden soll, weil, wie höchst Deroselben Worthe waren, ein solches Dieselbe divertiren, dagegen aber auch so denn frembde Ministri sich nicht würden beschwerden können, wenn in den hiesigen Zeitungen hin und wieder Paßagen anzutreffen, so Ihnen misfallen könnten. Ich nahm mir zwar die Freyheit darauff zu regeriren, daß der Rußische Hoff über dieses Sujet sehr pointilleuz wäre, Sr. Königl. Mayestät erwiederten aber daß Gazetten wenn sie interressant seyn sollten nicht geniret werden müsten.

His Royal Majesty most graciously commanded me, after the table had been cleared, to make known that the Berlin newspaper writer is to be left an unlimited freedom, in the Berlin article, to write what he likes about what is now going on here, without its being censored — because, in His Majesty's own words, such a thing would divert him, but also because foreign ministers could not then complain if passages were now and then found in the local newspapers that might displease them. I did indeed take the liberty of objecting that the Russian court is very touchy on this subject; but His Majesty replied that gazettes, if they are to be interesting, must not be constrained.

Three things are in that paragraph and only the last of them is famous.

The freedom is *bounded*: it applies to the Berlin article — the local news — and not to the paper. The first stated motive is the King's own entertainment. And the second, which is the operative one, is diplomatic: if the press is formally uncensored, foreign envoys cannot lodge protests about what appears in it, because the state can disclaim responsibility for a thing it does not control. Podewils, who has to deal with the envoys, immediately raises the Russian court. The King's answer is that an interesting newspaper is a more useful newspaper.

That is not a liberty. It is deniability, constructed as a liberty, and its beneficiary is the foreign ministry. The same king used the papers as officious organs and is reported to have written up his own Silesian campaign anonymously for one of them — a state managing the news through a channel it had publicly declared free precisely so that its management could not be alleged.

And it did not last. The cabinet ministry restricted the newly granted freedom in 1741, introduced strict censorship of all books, and tightened it again in 1743. What survived was the reputation of the gesture, which was the part that had always been for export.

Where the effort actually went

Set that beside what the same reign spent on European opinion and the asymmetry is very large.

Frederick wrote in French, corresponded with Voltaire, refounded the Berlin Academy, published a refutation of Machiavelli in the year he invaded Silesia, and cultivated the reading public of a continent with an assiduity his father would have found incomprehensible. The purpose is not obscure. A kingdom thirty-nine years old, in a poor country of three million people, which had just taken a rich province from the house of Habsburg by main force, needed at every court in Europe to be something other than a bandit with an excellent drill-master — and that was recognition it could not compel, because nobody in Vienna or Versailles or London was under its guns.

Its own subjects were under its guns, believed what their pastors told them, and had no institutions through which their opinion could become a fact the state had to reckon with. So the state did not spend much on them.

The clearest statement of the resulting policy is the one the King wrote, in 1775, in the preface to the history of his own times — a document addressed to posterity and therefore, by design, to an audience that could not act on it:

La prudence empêche qu'on ne le détrompe, parce que ce serait le comble de la démence d'ébruiter soi-même, par vaine gloire, la partie faible de l'État... La prudence exige donc qu'on abandonne au public la liberté de ses jugements téméraires, et que, ne pouvant se justifier pendant sa vie sans compromettre l'intérêt de l'État, l'on se contente de se légitimer aux yeux désintéressés de la postérité.

Prudence forbids undeceiving it, because it would be the height of madness to publish oneself, out of vainglory, the weak part of the state... Prudence therefore requires that the public be abandoned to the liberty of its rash judgements, and that, being unable to justify oneself during one's life without compromising the interest of the state, one be content to legitimate oneself in the disinterested eyes of posterity.

The public is to be left to judge wrongly. Not corrected, not persuaded, not intimidated — abandoned. That is the posture of a ruler whose domestic audience does not have to be managed because it cannot do anything, and whose real anxiety is that the weak part of the state might become visible to people who could.

1819: the discovery that the channel is the target

Everything changes when the domestic audience acquires an instrument, and in the German lands that happened between the wars of liberation and the settlement that followed them. What the states did about it is one of the most technically instructive documents in this whole study, because it states the mechanism in its own text.

The Carlsbad ministerial conferences produced four laws, confirmed by the Federal Diet on 20 September 1819. The press law, implemented in Prussia by the censorship ordinance of 18 October, opens:

So lange als der gegenwärtige Beschluß in Kraft bleiben wird, dürfen Schriften, die in der Form täglicher Blätter oder heftweise erscheinen, deßgleichen solche, die nicht über 20 Bogen im Druck stark sind, in keinem deutschen Bundesstaate ohne Vorwissen und vorgängige Genehmigung der Landesbehörden zum Druck befördert werden.

So long as the present decree remains in force, writings which appear in the form of daily papers or in instalments, and likewise those which do not exceed twenty sheets in print, may in no German federal state be sent to press without the prior knowledge and approval of the state authorities.

Read what that measures. Not subject matter. Not doctrine. Not the author's politics. **Periodicity and length.** A daily paper is pre-censored; a serial is pre-censored; anything under twenty sheets — three hundred and twenty pages — is pre-censored. A four-hundred-page book containing precisely the same argument goes to press unexamined and is dealt with, if at all, afterwards.

The reasoning is not stated and does not need to be. A pamphlet is cheap, quick, portable, passed hand to hand and read aloud; a four-hundred-page book is expensive, slow, and reaches a few hundred people who are already inside the educated class. The state is not policing ideas. It is policing distribution, and it has chosen its threshold at the point where cost stops excluding readers.

Two further clauses complete the design. Section nine requires every printed work in Germany to carry the publisher's name, and every newspaper or periodical the editor's name as well; works without these may circulate in no federal state. That is the identification of the channel operator, and it is the precondition of everything else — you cannot disable a pipe you cannot name.

And section seven says the thing outright:

Aussprüche der Bundesversammlung werden ausschließend gegen die Schriften, nie gegen die Personen, gerichtet.

Pronouncements of the Federal Assembly are directed exclusively against the writings, never against the persons.

There is the proposition, in a statute, in 1819. The framework has held that competent suppression moves from punishing the speaker to disabling the channel, and has expected to date that shift somewhere in the industrial era. It had already happened, and the suppressors had written it down as a principle of their own procedure. The clause reads as a moderating concession — we go after books, not men — and it is nothing of the kind. It is a statement of where the leverage is.

(One should not be too neat about it. The same package included the investigation law, the central commission at Mainz, the surveillance of universities, the dismissal and professional banning of suspect professors, the dissolution of the student associations and the closing of the gymnastic grounds, and the persecution of demagogues that followed. Persons were emphatically pursued. But the *press* law, which is the instrument aimed at the general public rather than at an identified faction, is a pure channel measure, and that separation is itself the finding: identified enemies are handled as persons, the anonymous public is handled as a distribution problem.)

The system worked poorly, in the way such systems do. Publishers and editors learned to hide their politics better, especially in the cultural sections, and the extensions and tightenings of the following decades are the record of an administration failing to keep up with its own subjects' ingenuity.

1878: the plates and the formes

Censorship in the Prussian sense was abolished by the constitution of 1850, and what replaced it over the following generation was a set of instruments that never used the word: caution deposits, licensing of distribution, administrative warnings, postal exclusion. The endpoint of that development, and the sharpest test the framework could ask for, is the law of 21 October 1878 against the socially dangerous endeavours of Social Democracy.

Its structure is worth stating precisely because it is so pure. Associations pursuing social-democratic, socialist or communist aims directed at the overthrow of the existing order of state or society are to be prohibited. Meetings in which such aims appear are to be dissolved; meetings that may be presumed to serve them are to be forbidden; public festivities and processions are assimilated to meetings; the police authority decides, and appeal lies only to its own supervising authority. Publications in which such aims appear in a manner endangering the public peace, and in particular the concord of the classes of the population, are to be prohibited. And the police are empowered to seize

such publications, together with the plates and formes serving to reproduce them, before any prohibition has even been issued.

The plates and the formes. Not the argument, not the author, not even the printed copies — the means of reproduction, taken in advance of the order banning what they would have produced. That is the terminal form of the move begun in 1819, and there is nowhere further for it to go.

The scale was substantial: something over thirteen hundred publications banned across the empire, and something over three hundred associations dissolved; a minor state of siege proclaimed over Berlin, Hamburg, Leipzig and other centres, under which persons could be expelled from their homes without trial, and eight hundred or more were; landlords refused rooms, publicans risked their licences, officials attending meetings breached their duty, and rural labourers caught distributing ballot papers were reported to their estate owners and lost their employment and their housing.

And it failed completely, in a way that is the module's most useful single finding.

The law prohibited associations, meetings and publications. It did not touch the franchise. Social Democratic candidates therefore continued to stand, and their deputies continued to sit in the Reichstag throughout the twelve years of the ban. Every channel the movement had was closed except the one the state had itself opened, for reasons of its own, a decade earlier. The party's newspaper was printed abroad and smuggled in. Its organisation went underground. Its electorate, having nowhere else to put its opinion, put all of it into the ballot — and the vote rose to about a million four hundred thousand by 1890, close to a fifth of the poll, making it the largest party by votes cast in the country whose law had banned it.

That is not merely an irony. It is a mechanism, and it should be stated as one. **Where a state disables all of a movement's channels but one, the movement does not disperse. It migrates entirely into the surviving channel and concentrates there,** which makes that channel far more consequential than it was designed to be. Suppression that is not total is a funnel, and the suppressor chooses the spout.

The distant audience, and the covenant the crown wrote itself

The last question is the one the framework cares about most: was there ever an external audience with leverage over this state, and what happened when the leverage lapsed?

There were three, and their fates are instructive in sequence.

The first was Poland, suzerain of the duchy of Prussia, to whom the ducal estates could and did appeal. That check ended in the treaties of 1657 and 1660, and the manner of its ending has been set out elsewhere in this study: the estates' liberties and

the Polish suzerainty were the same object seen from two ends, and the war that obtained the second abolished the first.

The second was the Empire. When Frederick William I's land survey brought noble estates onto the tax rolls, the Magdeburg knighthood appealed to the Imperial Aulic Council at Vienna and obtained a mandate declaring the change flatly contrary to the old German constitution and warning that it would serve the coming extirpation of the noble estate. That is a real external check, exercised against a Prussian fiscal measure by a court outside Prussia, and it did not stop the King. It ended altogether in 1806 with the Empire itself.

The third is the interesting one, because the state created it deliberately and could not then get rid of it.

Prussia emerged from the Napoleonic wars enormously indebted, and a state that intends to borrow again must persuade lenders it will pay. On 17 January 1820 Frederick William III issued the ordinance on the future handling of the whole state debt. It declared the debt closed at its existing figure, established the machinery for servicing and amortising it, and — this is the clause that mattered — reserved participation in any future state loan to an assembly of imperial estates to be formed from the population of the whole Prussian state. The ordinance says what it is for: *Wir hoffen dadurch... das Vertrauen zum Staate und zu seiner Verwaltung zu befestigen*, we hope thereby to strengthen confidence in the state and its administration.

The constitutional promises Frederick William III had made in 1810, 1812, 1813, 1815, 1820 and 1821 all came to nothing. No Prussian constitution existed and no state-wide representation was created; provincial diets on an estates basis followed from 1823 and that was all. But the debt covenant was of a different kind from a promise, because it had been sold to creditors, and a state that breaks a covenant made to its bondholders pays for it in the price of its next loan.

So the crown honoured it in the only way that cost nothing: it did not borrow. For twenty-seven years.

Then the railways made borrowing unavoidable, and in February 1847 Frederick William IV convened the United Diet — reciting, in the ordinance that summoned it, the debt ordinance of 17 January 1820 and the provincial estates law of 1823, and providing that new loans should henceforth be raised only with the concurrence and co-guarantee of the assembled diet, and in peacetime not without its consent. The diet met, declined to be a mere loan-guaranteeing committee, demanded the constitution it had been promised for thirty years, and refused the money.

That is the sharpest form of the proposition this study has. A distant audience checks an order only while it holds something the order cannot otherwise obtain —

and Prussia's subjects held nothing of the kind for two centuries. What finally gave them leverage was not a foreign guarantor and not a moral claim. It was a bond covenant, written by the crown itself, to reassure a market. **A constitutional guarantee issued to strengthen a state's credit is a lever handed to its subjects, and it cannot be retracted without a default** — which makes it, for a population that has no external protector, the most durable check available, and the place a study should look when the constitutions turn out to be empty.

Reading information and suppression against the framework

The audience an order works hardest to manage is the one whose recognition it cannot compel — and the instrument may look like a freedom. Prussia in 1740 could compel its subjects and could not compel the courts of Europe, and its effort went outward accordingly. The press freedom granted in June of that year was, on the evidence of the transmitting document, an instrument of that outward operation: unlimited freedom in the Berlin article so that, in the minister's own record of the King's words, foreign ministers could not then complain about passages that displeased them. **Where you meet an unexpected domestic liberty, ask whom the state thereby stopped having to answer to.** The grant of a freedom is one of the cheapest ways to acquire deniability, and a state that has been made not-responsible for its press has gained something more useful than control of it.

Proposition sixteen is confirmed and must be back-dated, because the suppressors wrote it down themselves. The Federal press law of 1819 keyed pre-censorship to periodicity and length — dailies, serials, anything under twenty sheets — exempting the long book containing the identical argument; required the publisher's and editor's names on every printed work, so that the channel operator could be identified; and declared in section seven that its pronouncements were directed exclusively against the writings and never against the persons. **A censorship regime keyed to format rather than to subject is the signature of a state that has understood its problem,** and the threshold it selects is a direct statement of where it believes the dangerous readership begins. Look for the number.

The terminal form of channel suppression is the seizure of the means of reproduction. The 1878 law authorised the police to take not merely the prohibited publications but the plates and formes used to make them, before the prohibition had issued. From the person, to the writing, to the press itself: there is no further step available in the technology of the period, and where a study finds a state taking presses it has found the end of that particular road rather than a beginning.

Suppression that is not total is a funnel, and the suppressor chooses the spout. The Socialist Law closed the party's associations, meetings and publications and left the imperial franchise untouched, because the franchise had been granted a decade earlier for reasons that had nothing to do with the socialists. Every unit of political energy the movement possessed therefore went into the one aperture left open, and the party that had been banned became the largest by votes in the empire within twelve years. **Before disabling an order's channels, an apex should be made to say which one it is leaving open, because that is the one it will face.**

And a distant audience can be manufactured by the order itself, in the bond market. Poland's guarantee of the Prussian estates ended when the sovereignty was bought; the Empire's court ended with the Empire; and Prussia's constitutional promises, of which there were at least six, were all worthless. The one commitment that bound was the debt ordinance of 1820, which reserved future borrowing to an assembly that did not yet exist, because it had been issued to creditors rather than to subjects, and creditors price a broken covenant. The crown kept it by not borrowing for twenty-seven years and then had to convene the estates to build railways. **A promise made to a market is enforceable where a promise made to subjects is not, and a study that finds a constitution unhonoured should go and look at the loan documents,** because that is where a state's word is actually collateralised.

A note on sources. German primary quotations are given exactly, in the original orthography, and are in the public domain. Podewils's letter of 5 June 1740 is quoted from the text as reproduced in German reference collections of familiar quotations, which give it at length from the archival original; I have not seen the manuscript, and readers should note that the famous final clause circulates in several slightly variant renderings. The Federal Press Law of 20 September 1819 is quoted from the text reproduced by *German History in Documents and Images*; the provisions on the imprint and on pronouncements being directed at writings rather than persons are from the same text. The preface of 1775 to the *Histoire de mon temps* is from the Trier digital edition of the *Œuvres de Frédéric le Grand*. The provisions of the law of 21 October 1878 are paraphrased closely from the text reproduced on Wikisource from the *Reichsgesetzblatt*, and the phrase about the plates and formes serving reproduction is from that text; I have paraphrased rather than quoted at length because the passages are long and the translation would be my own throughout. The ordinance on the state debt of 17 January 1820 and the ordinance forming the United Diet of 3 February 1847 are quoted and summarised from the texts reproduced at verfassungen.de. Translations are mine and deliberately literal.

Figures. The Socialist Law's effects are given in the literature at something over 1,300 publications prohibited and something over 300 associations dissolved, with more than 800 persons expelled under the minor state of siege; the Social Democratic vote in 1890 at about 1.4 million, near a fifth of votes cast. These are the figures usually reported and should be treated as approximate. The law was in force from October 1878 to September 1890 and was extended four times.

Two things I could not do properly and will not pretend to. First, the Prussian press regime between 1850 and 1878 — the constitutional abolition of censorship and the substitution of caution money, concessions for distributors, administrative warnings and postal exclusion — I have described in general terms from secondary knowledge without quoting the press law of 1851 or the imperial press law of 1874, neither of which I consulted. That passage should be read as a sketch requiring verification. Second, the *Kulturkampf*'s treatment of the pulpit as a channel — the penal provision of 1871 directed at clergy discussing state affairs — is exactly the kind of episode this module should contain, since it is the state discovering a rival interpreter still standing in the one institution it had annexed rather than built; I have not researched it and have therefore left it out rather than characterise it from memory. Both belong in any revision.

A limitation carried forward: the information regime as it applied to the Polish-speaking provinces, where language policy is itself a channel measure of the most direct kind, is absent from this module entirely.

THE MINISTERS BEAR NO RESPONSIBILITY

Elite coordination and the default: what a single Junker was standing on and why every plank of it was also part of the floor, the group that could have broken the arrangement and voted instead to ratify it, and the fence built round the army to keep it from the parliament that ended by keeping it from everyone

What is being asked

The ordinary subject has been priced already: why he complied, what compliance bought him, what refusal cost. This module is about the people above him — the estate owners, the officers, the officials, the ministers — and it asks a different question, which is not why they obeyed but why they *coordinated*.

Men at that level do not need to be coerced and mostly cannot be. They need to converge. And the observation that organises this whole part of the framework is that in the arrangements which lasted, they converge without meaning to, because the arrangement has been built so that each man defending his own position is thereby defending the whole. He need not approve of the sovereign. He need not like his colleagues; in Prussia a great many of them detested one another and said so in writing. He need only protect what he has, and the sum of a few thousand such private defences is the maintenance of the order, performed continuously, at no cost to anybody, by people who would be astonished to be told they were doing it.

Where that has been well built, the arrangement is extremely hard to change from inside, because there is nobody with standing whose interest points the other way. Where it has been built badly — where some group with real standing and real means finds that its position can be protected without protecting the arrangement — the thing comes apart, and it comes apart from there and not from below.

So the module has two halves. First, how tightly was the Prussian default built. Second, where was the loose plank.

What one man was standing on

Take an estate owner in the Uckermark or East Prussia in, say, 1880, and inventory what he holds.

His land is his outright, allodial, since his ancestor's obligation to furnish a mounted man was bought out for a money payment in 1717. On that land his family has, for generations, exercised the court of first instance over the people living there, confirmed to his class in the great settlement of 1653. He ships his rye free of toll by the terms of the same instrument. His estate carries a tax status that a peasant holding does not. The district office of *Landrat* — the crown's administrator in his own neighbourhood — is filled from among his neighbours, on their nomination, with royal confirmation. His son went onto a register at twelve and into the King's cadet school, and now holds a commission that the sovereign grants and can revoke. In the Prussian house of deputies his vote is weighted by the tax he pays, so that he and a handful of men like him elect as many representatives as several hundred of their labourers. And since 1879 the price of the rye he sells is supported by an imperial tariff.

Now ask what happens to each of those if the arrangement ends.

The court goes. The tax status goes. The toll freedom goes. The *Landrat* becomes somebody else's appointment. The commission becomes a career open to competitive examination, which his son would not win. The weighted vote goes. The tariff goes and the American and Russian grain comes in at the world price.

He is not being asked to love the Hohenzollerns. Many of his class had a low opinion of Wilhelm II and said so at dinner. He is being asked, in effect, nothing at all — merely to go on doing what any man does, which is to hold what he has. And the structure has been arranged so that every plank he is standing on is also a plank in the floor.

Add the same exercise for the other positions and the interlocking becomes visible. The officer's career rests on the officer corps remaining a noble preserve, which rests on the estates remaining in noble hands, which rests on the conveyancing rules. The state's ability to field an enormous army cheaply rested for two centuries on sending conscripts home for nine months of the year, which was only safe because there was a lord with legal power over them where they came from. The official's promotion runs through a bureaucracy whose senior posts are, by long practice, filled from the same families. The planks are nailed to each other, and that is the difference between a hierarchy and a default.

The men who did not like each other

It is worth insisting on the friction, because the framework's claim is precisely that agreement is not required.

The nobility resisted almost every major measure the crown put to it. It fought the conversion of fiefs into allodial property in 1717 and had to be beaten down province

by province, one knighthood at a time. It fought the land survey in East Prussia; the Magdeburg knights went so far as to appeal to the Imperial court at Vienna, which obligingly declared the reform contrary to the old German constitution and warned that it would end in the extirpation of the noble estate. It fought the compulsory enrolment of its sons in the cadet corps. In the nineteenth century it fought, through the Prussian upper house, the reform of local government that stripped the estate owner of his police authority in his own district, and had to be overborne.

None of that made any difference to the coordination, because the coordination did not run on consent. A nobleman who had just lost a fight with the crown over the tax rolls went home to an estate whose jurisdiction, exemptions and marketing privileges were still guaranteed by the same crown, and whose son was still in the same King's regiment. His grievance was real and his interest was unchanged. That is what alignment without agreement looks like, and it is why a study that measures elite loyalty by the temperature of elite complaint will get the wrong answer every time.

The test: the group that could have broken it

The framework's proposition is that a default is broken not by the group that stops benefiting but by the group whose position can be defended without defending the arrangement. Prussia offers an unusually clean opportunity to test that, because in the 1860s a group with real standing, a real instrument and a real grievance took the arrangement on directly — and lost, and then voted to ratify its own defeat.

The Prussian constitution of 1850 gave the house of deputies a co-equal legislative competence and, with it, the budget. From 1859 the crown wanted to reorganise the army: longer service, more line regiments, and the reduction of the citizen militia which the liberals regarded as the constitutional counterweight to a royal standing army. The house refused the money. The two questions fused, and they fused around exactly the right issue: whether the representative body's competence reached into military affairs at all, and whether the monarch could spend without a voted budget.

Bismarck, appointed minister-president in September 1862, resolved it by observing that the constitution said nothing about what should happen if crown and chamber could not agree. From that silence — the *Lückentheorie*, the theory of the gap, whose lineage runs back to the conservative jurist Friedrich Julius Stahl — he drew the conclusion that in an unregulated case the monarch as sovereign decides. He then governed from 1862 to 1866 without a budget passed by the house, collecting the taxes and paying the army, and carried the reorganisation through.

That is a straightforward constitutional breach and he did not much pretend otherwise. The question the module cares about is what the other side did.

After the victory over Austria in July 1866, Bismarck brought an indemnity bill: it retrospectively legalised the budgets of 1862 to 1865, and simultaneously conceded in express terms the chamber's budget right. The house passed it. The liberals split, the right wing forming a new party, and the National Liberals became for a decade the government's parliamentary support.

Read that as a test of the proposition and it comes out clean. The liberal bourgeoisie had standing, an instrument and a grievance. What it did not have was a position it could defend without the arrangement. Its members wanted a national market, a national state, careers in an expanding administration, the security of property and the suppression of the classes below them — and the arrangement was, visibly and in that very summer, delivering all of it. To break the default they would have had to prefer a constitutional principle to the whole material content of their own position, and enough of them did not. The indemnity bill let them keep the principle on paper while conceding the substance, which is the offer such a group nearly always takes.

So the largest and best-organised challenge the Prussian settlement faced from inside was absorbed, and the absorbing was done not by force but by giving the challengers something they wanted more. That is the default working exactly as the framework says it should.

The loose plank: an instrument fenced off from everyone

Where, then, is the group whose position can be defended without defending the arrangement? The answer is the one the framework predicts, and it was built deliberately, in stages, by men solving the problem in front of them.

Begin with the doctrine. The Prussian monarch's authority over the army was held to be a *Kommandogewalt* — a power of command personal to him, distinct from the ordinary business of government and not subject to ministerial countersignature. What that means constitutionally is stated with complete flatness in a German encyclopaedia of 1905, and the sentence deserves to be read slowly because it is the whole of this module in one clause:

Da die Minister für Ausübung der königlichen Kommandogewalt keine Verantwortlichkeit tragen, kann der tatsächliche Einfluß des Chefs des Militärkabinetts in Kommandoangelegenheiten sehr bedeutend sein.

Since the ministers bear no responsibility for the exercise of the royal command authority, the actual influence of the Chief of the Military Cabinet in matters of command can be very considerable.

Follow the architecture that grew in that space. The military establishment had three heads, not one. The War Minister was answerable — to the Prussian chamber and, for imperial business, through the Chancellor to the Reichstag. The Chief of the Great General Staff was not. The Chief of the Military Cabinet was not.

The Military Cabinet had begun as the personnel department of the war ministry created in the reforms of 1808–09; it acquired independent weight after 1850, and in 1883 it was raised to an *Immediatbehörde*, a body reporting directly to the monarch. Its business was everything subject to the command authority, and in particular the appointment, promotion, dismissal, discipline, honour and decoration of officers. Its chief was simultaneously the presenting adjutant-general, saw the Kaiser several times a week, attended almost every military audience, and — the encyclopaedia notes the point precisely — was, unlike the War Minister, legally wholly dependent on the monarch and on nobody else.

The Great General Staff separated from the war ministry over the course of the nineteenth century, became formally independent in 1821, and in 1883, by cabinet order of 24 May, was likewise made an *Immediatbehörde*. The right of direct audience had been conferred personally on Moltke after the war of 1870–71; in 1883 it was institutionalised in the office.

So by 1883 the career of every officer in the Prussian army, and the planning of every war it might fight, sat outside the reach of any minister who could be questioned by any elected body. What remained inside ministerial responsibility was the money and the administration — which is to say, the part that could be argued about and not the part that mattered.

Why it was built that way

The insulation was not an accident and it was not a coup. It was defensive, and the defence was against the parliament.

Everything in the preceding paragraphs grew directly out of the conflict of 1862–66. The whole substance of that quarrel was whether the representative body's competence extended into the army; the crown's position was that it did not; and every subsequent arrangement embedded that position more deeply. The imperial constitution vested the command in the Emperor. The strength of the army was fixed not annually but by statute for a term of years — seven from 1874, later five — so that the establishment could not be revisited each budget. And the command channel was routed round the only military officer who had to answer for anything.

Each of those decisions is intelligible, even reasonable, from the position of the man making it. A monarch who has just spent four years being told by a chamber of lawyers

how many battalions he may have does not want to have that conversation again, and he takes the obvious step of putting the thing where the conversation cannot reach.

And here is the finding. **An instrument fenced off from a rival is fenced off from its owner too, because a fence does not know who is on which side.** The command authority was insulated so that the King should keep his army out of the Reichstag's hands. It worked. Two generations later the fence was still standing and the King was outside it: an emperor of limited application, faced with a general staff that planned without him, a military cabinet that managed the officer corps without him, and no body anywhere in the constitution in which the chancellor, the war minister, the chief of staff and the cabinet chief were obliged to sit down together.

That is a second sovereign — a component of the state with an independent instrument of force, insulated from every mechanism by which the rest of the state is coordinated or held to account. It is exactly the arrangement the framework predicts will produce the fracture, and it is exactly the arrangement this collection has found before, in a state that took Prussia as its model.

The chronology needs care and I will not overstate it. The Japanese general staff was made independent in 1878, before the Prussian orders of 1883, so the specific instruments were not copied in that direction and in that year. What was visibly operating in Prussia when the Japanese studied it in the 1870s and 1880s was the *principle*: a command channel personal to the monarch, separate from ministerial responsibility, with officer personnel inside it. That principle they took, and it is the principle that produced, in both states, a military leadership answerable to a sovereign too weak to control it and to nobody else at all. **On the evidence of the two cases, the second sovereign is not a national peculiarity of either. It is a property of this design, and it travels with the design.**

Where coordination went

The framework's related proposition is that where an apex is made unarguable in order to be cheap, the real coordination migrates to an informal body that can never be reformed or succeeded, because it does not formally exist. Prussia-Germany supplies the instance and even supplies the moment.

The one formal instrument for coordinating the German state was the chancellorship, and behind it an old Prussian cabinet order requiring ministers to reach the King through the minister-president. In 1890 Bismarck attempted to enforce that order against a young emperor who wanted to hear his ministers directly; Wilhelm II demanded its repeal; Bismarck went. What replaced it was nothing. There was no cabinet in the British sense: the Chancellor was the only responsible minister of the

empire, the state secretaries were his subordinates, the Prussian ministers were a separate body, and the military chiefs answered to the monarch alone.

Coordination therefore happened where it could — in the monarch's entourage, among the men holding the right of direct audience: the adjutants-general, the chief of the military cabinet, the naval cabinet, the chief of staff, whoever had the Kaiser's ear that month. That body has no name in any constitution, no membership rule, no procedure, no minutes and no successor. It cannot be reformed because it does not exist; it cannot be voted out because nobody elected it; and it cannot be replaced when its members die because there is no office to fill.

Where the formal coordinating instrument of a state is destroyed and not replaced, coordination does not stop. It relocates to whoever is physically nearest the apex, and it becomes permanently unreachable. That is a worse outcome than the arrangement it replaced, and the men who destroyed the old instrument thought they were removing an obstruction.

Topping up a failing default

One further mechanism belongs here, because it is the clearest single illustration of an apex maintaining a default deliberately when the default began to fail on its own.

From the 1870s the economic basis of the East Elbian estate was collapsing. Steamships, American prairie and Russian black earth put grain into European ports below what a sandy Brandenburg estate could produce it for; the crash of 1873 was followed by two decades of falling prices; and the class whose entire position rested on selling rye was going under. A settlement partner who is going bankrupt is a settlement partner whose default is about to fail, because a man with nothing left to protect has nothing left to protect the arrangement with.

The answer was legislated. On 12 July 1879 the Reichstag passed the protective tariff, carried by the conservatives and the Centre with a portion of the National Liberals — duties on iron, grain, timber, cattle and colonial groceries, of which the duty on iron was about seventeen per cent of the market price. The coalition was named at the time with perfect accuracy: the chimney barons and the cabbage junkers, iron and rye. Bismarck ended the Kulturkampf to buy the Centre's votes for it.

Then watch the grain duty over the following generation. The tariff on wheat rose from ten marks a tonne in 1880 to seventy marks a tonne by 1913.

That is not agricultural policy. It is the maintenance of a settlement. The class whose position had underwritten the officer corps, the local administration and the manorial order for two centuries had lost the market that paid for it, and the state legislated it a replacement income at the expense of everyone who ate bread. The

transfer ran from the urban worker's household budget to the estate owner's balance sheet, and it was voted by a chamber elected on universal manhood suffrage, which is a fact worth holding onto.

The Menu of answers to the problem of a dangerous elite does not currently contain this move, and it should. It is not co-optation in the usual sense, because nothing new was granted and no new obligation imposed; the grantee had been co-opted two centuries earlier. It is the *repair* of a co-optation whose original consideration had stopped paying. **Where a settlement partner's economic base fails, an apex that cannot afford to lose him will legislate him a substitute income, and the tell that this is default-maintenance rather than economic policy is the distribution: who is protected, and who pays.** In this case the protected party was the smallest of the interests involved and the paying party was the largest, which is only possible where the protected party's political value greatly exceeds its economic weight — and that gap is itself the measure of how much the arrangement needed him.

The fracture, and who delivered it

The end is not this module's subject, but the shape of it confirms the argument and should be stated.

The arrangement was not broken by the workers, who had numbers and no instrument. It was not broken by the liberals, who had an instrument in 1862 and traded it in 1866 for the things they wanted more. It was not broken by the Catholics, who were attacked and then bought back with a tariff and the end of the *Kulturkampf*. It was not broken by the Social Democrats, who by 1890 were the largest party by votes in a state that had banned them, and who could do nothing with that except vote.

It was broken from inside the fence. By 1916 the supreme command under Hindenburg and Ludendorff had displaced the civil government in all the decisions that mattered, exercising an authority that no minister answered for and no assembly could reach — which was precisely the condition the command authority had been designed to create. And in November 1918 it was the army leadership that informed the Emperor that the army no longer stood behind him.

The second sovereign delivered the verdict on the first. That is what an insulated component with an independent instrument of force eventually does, and the insulation was installed, sincerely and defensively, by men protecting the monarchy from a chamber of deputies.

Reading the default against the framework

The tightest defaults are built by nailing the planks to each other, and the **diagnostic is transitive**. The Prussian estate owner's position rested on his court, his tax status, his toll freedom, his neighbour's *Landrat* office, his son's commission and, latterly, a grain tariff — and each of those rested in turn on some other part of the same structure: the commission on the noble monopoly of the officer corps, the officer corps on the conveyancing rule, the cheap mass army on the villagers' bond, the villagers' bond on the manorial court. **Do not merely ask what each beneficiary would lose; ask what each of his holdings is itself resting on**, because a default whose supports are independent can be dismantled piecemeal, and a default whose supports are mutually dependent can only be dismantled all at once, which nobody with standing ever wants to do.

Elite complaint is not a measure of elite alignment, and a study that reads it as one will be wrong. The Prussian nobility fought the allodification of 1717, the East Prussian land survey, the cadet register and the reform of local government, and lost most of those fights, and went on holding the arrangement up throughout, because losing a fight over the tax rolls did not alter a single item in its interest column. **Alignment requires no agreement, and the volume of grumbling in an elite's private papers tells you nothing about whether it will defend the order** — for which the operative test is not what a man says but what he would lose.

A challenger with standing and an instrument will still not break a default if the arrangement is delivering the content of his position. The Prussian liberals of 1862 had the budget power, used it, and after four years of illegal government voted a bill legalising the illegality while conceding their own principle on paper. They did so in the summer the same arrangement handed them a national state. **Before asking whether a group can break an order, ask what it wants more than the thing it is fighting about**, because that is what will be offered to it and that is what it will take.

Insulation installed against a rival ends by protecting the insulated component from its owner. The Prussian command authority was fenced off from ministerial responsibility to keep the army out of a parliament's hands after the conflict of the 1860s; by 1883 both the general staff and the military cabinet reported directly to the monarch and answered to no minister; by 1916 the men inside the fence were governing. **A fence does not know who is on which side, and every insulation of an instrument of force should be read forward with that in mind** — the question is never only whom it currently excludes but whom it will exclude when the apex is weaker than the man it appointed.

And on the second sovereign, the collection can now say something stronger than it could with one case. A command channel personal to the monarch, separate from ministerial responsibility, holding officer personnel inside it, was operating in Prussia when it was studied and copied, and produced in both the original and the copy a military leadership that no civil authority could reach and no assembly could question, which in both cases displaced the civil government under the strain of a great war. **The second sovereign is a property of this design rather than of either nation, and it travels with the design when the design is exported.** The corollary matters for reading any state that adopted the model: look for the insulation before looking for the pathology, because the pathology is downstream.

Finally, a candidate addition to the Menu: co-optation repaired by subsidy. When the East Elbian estate lost its market to American and Russian grain, the German state did not let its principal settlement partner fail; it legislated him a price, rising sevenfold on wheat between 1880 and 1913, paid for by the bread of the people who elected the chamber that voted it. **Where an apex meets a settlement partner whose original consideration has stopped paying, and cannot afford to lose him, expect a legislated substitute income** — and read the distribution to confirm it, because default-maintenance protects a small interest at the expense of a large one, and the ratio between them measures how badly the arrangement needed the man being protected.

A note on sources. The characterisation of the command authority and the position of the Chief of the Military Cabinet is quoted from the article *Militärkabinett* in the 1905 edition of Meyer's *Konversations-Lexikon*, a contemporary reference work, and the translation is my own; the point that the Chief of the Military Cabinet was, in contrast to the War Minister, legally wholly dependent on the King is from the same article. The institutional dates — the Military Cabinet's emergence from the war ministry's personnel department after the reorganisation of 1808–09, the term first appearing officially in a cabinet order of 3 June 1814, its acquisition of independent weight after 1850 and its elevation to an *Immediatbehörde* in 1883; the General Staff's independence in 1821 and its elevation by cabinet order of 24 May 1883; the conferral of the right of direct audience on Moltke personally after 1871 and its institutionalisation on the office in 1883 — are from the German archival finding aids and reference literature.

The account of the constitutional conflict follows the standard narrative: the reorganisation dispute from 1859, Bismarck's appointment on 22 or 23 September 1862 (the date is given both ways), the gap theory and its derivation from Friedrich Julius Stahl, government without a voted budget from 1862 to 1865, and the

indemnity bill of September 1866 retroactively approving the expenditure while expressly conceding the chamber's budget right. The tariff law was passed by the Reichstag on 12 July 1879, the pig-iron duty representing about seventeen per cent of market price, with the Franckenstein clause obliging the empire to share the new revenue with the states; the wheat duty rose from ten marks per tonne in 1880 to seventy marks per tonne by 1913. These figures are the ones usually reported and should be treated as approximate.

Three things in this module rest on general knowledge rather than on sources I consulted for it, and are flagged accordingly. The account of the Prussian cabinet order requiring ministers to reach the King through the minister-president, and Bismarck's attempt to invoke it in 1890, I have given in general terms without checking the text or the date of the order. The description of the supreme command's ascendancy in 1916–18 and of the army leadership's role in the abdication of November 1918 is stated at the level of the standard narrative and is not researched here; it belongs properly to the account of collapse and should be established there from the documents rather than assumed from this one. And the comparison with the Japanese case rests on the earlier study in this collection rather than on fresh research, so the claim about what travelled with the model is offered as a structural reading of two cases and not as a demonstration of transmission; the precise history of what the Japanese observers took, when, and from whom, needs a specialist.

Two limitations. The Prussian three-class franchise is mentioned here only as one item in an estate owner's holdings; it is the subject of the module that follows and is not analysed. And the coordination of the *bourgeois* elite — the chambers of commerce, the cartels, the higher civil service and the professoriate — is largely absent from this account, which concentrates on the landed and military interest because that is where the load was carried; a fuller treatment would have to price the industrialists' default as carefully as the Junkers', particularly after 1879, when they were brought into the same coalition.

PETITIONS UNDER A COMMON NAME

The liberty variable: where Prussian protections actually came from, why every one of them was granted to the individual and withheld from the combination, and what the same men were doing when they gave one chamber the widest franchise in Europe and kept the other under a public ballot

What is being looked for

There is a state apparatus. Does the ordinary person have any protection against it? Can he speak, meet, complain, sue, vote? And if he can, where did that come from — because he did not write it.

The claim this module tests is that protections are residue. They are produced by fights *inside* the hierarchy, when one faction bargains with another or with the apex from a position of enough strength that a concession is cheaper than a fight. The faction wants something narrow and self-interested — a court that will hear its complaints, a chamber that will vote its taxes, an office it can hold. But it cannot ask for a privilege in those terms and expect to be given one, because a naked privilege is a thing the other side can simply refuse. To make the demand arguable it has to be stated as a general principle, and the general statement is what survives on the page after the particular fight is over. Later, other people find the general statement lying there and pick it up.

So the module's work is to take each Prussian protection, find the fight that produced it, and then ask the second question, which is the one that matters: what made it more than words. A right that nobody can start a proceeding on, in a forum nobody can enter, against a party with no interest in honouring it, is a decoration.

The residue, in order

The court that would hear a peasant. The oldest protection in this study is also the least expected, and it comes out of the great settlement of 1653, where the nobility bargained for and obtained confirmation of its jurisdiction over its own villagers. In the same article the Elector reserved to the aggrieved subject not only appeal but the plea of nullity — and in the next article he priced the attempt, providing that a peasant who

complains at court and fails to make out his case goes to the tower. That is a privilege for the lord and a residue for the villager, in one instrument. The general form — that there is a superior court and it can be reached — was stated because the sovereign wanted to remain the final judge, and it was used for a century and a half by people who went to law against their lords and sometimes won.

Municipal self-government. The most durable liberty produced in this state came out of the catastrophe of 1806, when a beaten administration had to work out how to make a defeated population useful again. The municipal ordinance of 19 November 1808 gave Prussian towns elected councils and the management of their own affairs. The reformers' interest was administrative — a state that had lost half its territory needed its subjects to carry burdens they would not carry as objects of administration — and to make that arguable inside a bureaucracy that regarded self-government as an abdication, it had to be stated as a principle about what citizens are. The principle outlived the emergency by a hundred and ten years.

The opening of the land market. The October Edict of 1807 declared every inhabitant competent to own landed property of every kind, abolished the noble's privileges over burgher inheritances, and removed the restrictions attaching to the holder's personal status. It was drafted to make land saleable in a bankrupt state; it reads as a statement of civic equality; and the second reading is the one that lasted.

A written charter with a list of rights. This one is the hardest case for the framework's claim that structural change is elite, because what produced it was a mass rising. In March 1848 the crowd was in the streets of Berlin and the King conceded. What followed is instructive: a constitution octroyed on 5 December 1848, revised into the constitution of 31 January 1850, and in between — by ordinance of 30 May 1849 — a franchise designed to ensure that the chamber elected under the new charter would never be dangerous. So the honest statement is this. **A mass rising can extract a document. It cannot determine which clauses of the document operate, because that is settled afterwards, by the hierarchy, in the enabling legislation and the electoral law.** The crowd wrote the preamble; the counter-revolution wrote the schedule.

And the widest franchise in Europe, of which more below, which was picked up off the shelf by a man who had helped defeat the movement that put it there.

The pattern nobody drafted on purpose

Now read the rights catalogue of 1850 as a whole, and something appears that no single article displays.

Article 27: every Prussian has the right to express his opinion freely by word, writing, print and pictorial representation; censorship may not be introduced; every *other* restriction of press freedom only by way of legislation.

Article 29: all Prussians are entitled to assemble peaceably and unarmed, without prior official permission, **in closed rooms**. This provision does not extend to assemblies under the open sky, which as regards prior official permission are subject to the disposition of the law.

Article 30: all Prussians have the right of association; the law regulates the exercise of the right, particularly for the maintenance of public security; and **political associations may be subjected to restrictions and temporary prohibitions by way of legislation**.

Article 32: the right of petition belongs to all Prussians. **Petitions under a common name are permitted only to authorities and corporations.**

Article 33: the secrecy of correspondence is inviolable — save the restrictions necessary in criminal investigations and in cases of war.

Set them side by side and the shape is unmistakable, and it is not the shape one expects. This is not a charter of rights subject to emergency. It is a charter in which **every protection is granted to the individual and withheld from the combination**.

You may speak. You may not, without leave, combine politically to speak, because political associations are expressly liable to be restricted or banned by ordinary statute. You may assemble, provided you are indoors — which is to say, provided you are few enough to fit in a room and invisible from the street. You may petition; but a petition signed under a common name, which is the only kind a public can send, is reserved to authorities and corporations, that is, to bodies that are already part of the apparatus.

Article 111 completes the design by naming, in advance, the articles that may be suspended in war or rebellion: 5, 6, 7, 27, 28, 29, 30 and 36 — personal freedom, the inviolability of the dwelling, the lawful judge, expression, press offences, assembly, association. Property is not on that list. Equality before the law is not on that list. The right of petition is not on that list. The state told its subjects in advance precisely which of their rights it intended to switch off, and the ones it named are the ones by which people speak and combine; the ones it left alone are the ones by which a man holds a thing.

That is the answer to the framework's question about where an order's protections are suspended, and it identifies the load-bearing member with unusual precision. The thing being protected is not a doctrine. It is **the individual as the only lawful unit of political action** — and the reason is structural rather than ideological. An elite of a few thousand estate owners, officers and officials does not need to combine, because it

coordinates automatically: each man defending his own position defends the arrangement without arranging anything. Everyone else needs to combine or he is nothing. A rights catalogue that protects individuals and constrains combinations therefore costs the elite nothing whatever and disarms everybody else, and it can be drafted in perfectly good faith by men who believe they are securing liberty, because from where they stand they are.

It also explains why the great suppression of 1878 needed no constitutional amendment. The law banning the associations, meetings and publications of Social Democracy walked straight through the door Article 30 had left open twenty-eight years earlier: political associations may be subjected to restrictions and temporary prohibitions by way of legislation. The constitution was not broken. It was used.

The two franchises

Here is the case's gift, and it has to be laid out precisely because the two instruments were made by the same men within twenty years of each other.

The Prussian franchise. By royal ordinance of 30 May 1849 — issued after the national assembly had been dissolved — the second chamber was to be elected indirectly, by electors chosen by primary voters. Every self-supporting Prussian man of twenty-four had a vote, unless he was on poor relief. The primary voters of each district were then divided into three sections according to the direct state taxes they paid — class tax, land tax, trade tax — and divided in a very particular way, set out in section 10: not by headcount, but *so that each section carries one third of the total sum of the taxes of all the primary voters in the district.*

Each of the three sections then chose one third of the electors.

In practice the top section came to about four or five per cent of voters and the bottom section about eighty-two or eighty-three per cent, and each chose the same number of electors. In a country parish with one large estate, the estate owner could constitute the first section by himself; in a manufacturing town, a single great industrialist could do the same.

And the voting, at both stages, was **public and oral, recorded to the minutes.** The labourer stated his choice aloud in front of the man who employed him, housed him, and could dismiss him. When the Social Democrats campaigned against this system they always named the public ballot in the same breath as the classes, and they were right to, because in a manorial countryside a public ballot is not a franchise. It is a loyalty test with a register attached.

The imperial franchise. In 1867 the North German Confederation, and in 1871 the empire, elected a Reichstag by universal, equal, direct and secret manhood suffrage

of men over twenty-five. In the comparison of the time this was extraordinarily wide — wider than Britain's after the reform of the same year — and Prussia, which supplied the largest part of the electorate, kept its own three-class ordinance untouched until 1918.

So: what was each for?

The Prussian house of deputies legislated for the state that held the army, the administration, the police, the schools, the land law and three-fifths of the empire's population. It was the chamber whose consent Bismarck had done without for four years in the 1860s, and which had then voted him an indemnity. It was, in short, the assembly that could actually reach the floor — and it was elected by a public ballot weighted by tax payment.

The Reichstag could not appoint or dismiss a chancellor, could not touch the command authority, and could not fix the size of the army, whose establishment was set by statute for seven years and later five precisely so that it should not come up in an annual budget. It legislated for the empire, not for Prussia. It was, in the things that mattered most, a chamber that could talk.

The wide franchise was granted where it could not reach the floor, and the narrow one was kept where it could. That is the whole of the two-franchise arrangement, and it is the sharpest statement this collection has of what a granted liberty is worth: the answer depends entirely on what the body it elects is permitted to do.

Two honest complications, because the tidy account is too tidy.

The first is about motive. It is usually said that Bismarck granted universal suffrage as a tactical weapon, calculating that a rural electorate under the influence of crown, landlord and pastor would swamp the urban liberals. There is something in it — the elections of 1867 did return a conservative-liberal majority, to his satisfaction, and a Pomeranian nobleman warned him immediately that one could not fight a battle of Königgrätz before every election. But Margaret Anderson's work insists on a caution that should be recorded: no political movement preceded the grant, it was not obviously an instrument in any struggle among the ruling elites, and hardly any deputy spoke for the bill. A man may adopt an institution for several reasons at once, including reasons he does not state, and the confident account of a single calculation is probably too neat.

The second complication is the more interesting one, and it is the framework's proposition in its purest observable form. Bismarck did not invent the franchise he adopted. He took the **imperial electoral law of 12 April 1849** — the law drafted by

the Frankfurt National Assembly, the revolution's own instrument, denied and shelved when the revolution was crushed.

Eighteen years later the man who had helped to crush that movement reached for its electoral law because it suited him, and made it the basis of German public life. And the liberals who had feared it then claimed it: the founding programme of the National Liberal party in 1867 declares that universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage has been made the foundation of public life *with our co-operation*, admits that its dangers are not concealed from them, and predicts that it will prove the firmest bulwark of freedom.

That is the mechanism laid bare. A faction in 1848 wanted power and had to state its want as a general principle to make it arguable. The faction lost. The principle stayed on the shelf. Its enemy picked it up for his own reasons, and the heirs of the original faction then claimed credit for it and defended it. **The interest perishes with the fight; the generality is what accretes** — and it accretes into the hands of whoever finds it useful next, who need not be, and here was not, anybody who believed in it.

What made any of it more than paper

The user's real question, and the one a study of liberties has to answer or admit it cannot.

A protection becomes operative when three things are true at once: there is a forum the holder can enter without anybody's permission; there is a procedure he can start himself; and there is somebody inside the apparatus whose own position is served by the protection being honoured. Where all three hold, a right works. Where any one fails, it is decoration. Run the Prussian protections through that test and they sort cleanly.

The peasant's suit worked — imperfectly, at the risk of the tower, but it worked, and the estate records are full of it. The forum existed and he could enter it; the procedure was his to start; and the crown had a standing interest in his solvency, because an absorbed farm was a hearth struck off a regimental roll. Two extractors bidding for one body produced something the body could use.

The Reichstag vote worked, for what the Reichstag could do. It was secret, which removed the employer from the transaction; it was direct, which removed the intermediary; and the deputies had an interest in policing the purity of elections they themselves validated. The evidence that it worked is the party that was banned in 1878 and had become the largest by votes in the empire by 1890.

The Prussian vote did not work, and the reason is procedural rather than doctrinal. The forum was reachable and the procedure was his, but the third condition

failed catastrophically: the ballot was public, so the man best placed to punish the vote was standing in the room while it was cast.

The right of collective petition did not exist, so nothing needed to fail.

The right of political association existed at the legislature's pleasure, and in 1878 the legislature exercised the pleasure.

And there was one further institution that meets all three conditions and belongs in any honest accounting of this state: from the 1870s Prussia built a system of administrative courts, culminating in a supreme administrative tribunal, before which a subject could challenge an act of the administration and sometimes prevail. That is the most substantial liberty this order produced, and it came from exactly where the framework says such things come from — a bargain between a liberal chamber that wanted the bureaucracy checked and a bureaucracy that wanted its own decisions made lawful and final rather than perpetually contestable in politics. Each side got what it wanted; the residue is a court where a man can sue the state.

Reading the liberty variable against the framework

A rights catalogue should be read for what it does to combination, not for what it says about the individual. The Prussian constitution of 1850 grants expression, assembly, petition and association, and then confines assembly to closed rooms, reserves collective petition to authorities and corporations, and makes political associations liable to prohibition by ordinary statute. **Where an order's elite coordinates automatically by shared position and its opponents must organise to exist at all, a charter that protects individuals and constrains combinations is a charter that disarms one side only** — and it can be drafted in complete sincerity by men who cannot see the asymmetry because they have never needed to combine for anything. Test any rights catalogue by asking which of its protections require more than one person to exercise, and how those are qualified.

An order that pre-lists its suspendable rights has told you what it is afraid of. Article 111 names articles 5, 6, 7, 27, 28, 29, 30 and 36 — the person, the dwelling, the judge, speech, the press, assembly, association. Property is absent; equality before the law is absent; petition is absent. **The suspension list is the most candid document in a constitution**, because a state drafting one has to think concretely about which rights could actually be used against it, and it writes them down in order.

A mass rising can extract a document; it cannot determine which clauses operate. March 1848 produced a charter with a large rights catalogue. May 1849 produced, by ordinance, a franchise ensuring the chamber elected under that charter would be chosen by a public ballot weighted by tax payment. **The crowd writes the**

preamble and the hierarchy writes the schedule, and a study that dates a liberty from the revolution will misattribute it — the date that matters is the date of the enabling legislation, and the author who matters is whoever drafted it after the barricades came down.

Proposition twenty is confirmed in the cleanest instance this collection has. The Frankfurt assembly of 1848–49 drafted an electoral law to serve its own bid for power and had to state it as a universal principle to make it arguable. The bid failed. Eighteen years later the man who had helped defeat it took the law off the shelf, for reasons of his own, and made it the foundation of German public life; and the political heirs of the men who wrote it then claimed the credit and called it the firmest bulwark of freedom. **The interest dies with the faction. The generality survives, unattached, available to whoever finds a use for it — and its next user is under no obligation to share the original purpose, or even to have heard of it.** That is what makes liberties genuinely durable and also what makes them unreliable: they are not held by anybody, which is why they cannot easily be taken back, and also why they can be picked up by people who mean the opposite.

Grant the franchise where it cannot reach the floor. The same men gave the empire a direct, equal, secret manhood suffrage and kept for Prussia an indirect, unequal, public one, in the same generation, without embarrassment — because the Reichstag could not appoint a government, could not touch the command authority and could not fix the army, while the Prussian chamber legislated for the state that held all three. **The width of a franchise tells you nothing until you have established the competence of the body it elects**, and where a state operates two franchises the comparison is a direct measurement of where it believes its floor is.

And the operative test of any protection is procedural. A forum the holder can enter unaided; a proceeding he can start himself; and a party inside the apparatus whose position is served by compliance. The Prussian villager's suit against his lord had all three and worked. The imperial ballot had all three — crucially the secrecy, which removed the one person able to punish the vote — and worked well enough to make a banned party the largest in the country. The Prussian ballot failed on the third alone, and being public was enough to void it entirely. **When assessing a paper right, do not argue about its wording. Ask who can start the proceeding, where, and who inside the state loses if it succeeds.**

A note on sources. The articles of the revised Prussian constitution of 31 January 1850 are quoted in the original from the text reproduced at verfassungen.de and by the constitutional-documents collections of the German law faculties; the translations are my own. Article 111's list of suspendable articles and the reference to the law on the

state of siege of 4 June 1851 are from the same text. The electoral ordinance of 30 May 1849 is quoted from the text at verfassungen.de, and the crucial provision — that the primary voters are divided into three sections so that one third of the total tax sum falls on each section, computed by commune or district — is section 10 of that ordinance. The proportions of the three classes (about four to five per cent, thirteen per cent and eighty-two to eighty-three per cent) are those given in the German parliamentary and museum reference literature for 1850 and for 1908 respectively; the public and oral character of the voting at both stages is from the same sources. The imperial franchise of 1867 and 1871 rested on the Frankfurt imperial electoral law of 12 April 1849. The passage from the National Liberal founding programme of 1867 is quoted from a secondary work reproducing it, and I have not checked it against the original text of the programme.

Modern scholarship is credited. The caution against the standard account of Bismarck's motives for universal suffrage — that no movement preceded the grant, that it was not obviously an instrument in an elite power struggle, and that almost no deputy spoke for it — is Margaret Lavinia Anderson's, from her work on elections and political culture in imperial Germany; I have set it against the conventional reading rather than choosing between them.

Several things here are thinner than I would like and are flagged. The account of the Prussian administrative courts, which I take to be the most substantial protection this order produced, rests on general knowledge and not on research done for this module: I have not verified the founding date of the supreme administrative tribunal, the terms of the statutes establishing the system, or the parliamentary history that produced them, and the characterisation of the bargain behind it is an inference from the framework rather than a finding. It needs proper work. The municipal ordinance of 19 November 1808 and the reformers' reasoning behind it I have likewise given from general knowledge without consulting the ordinance or Stein's memoranda. And the claim that a single large taxpayer could constitute the first electoral class by himself follows from the arithmetic of section 10 and is illustrated in the German reference literature by the case of a great industrialist in Essen; I have stated the arithmetic, which is secure, rather than the example, which I have not checked.

Two absences to record. The Polish provinces are the place where this module's proposition about suspended protections should bite hardest — a state whose central legal principle since 1794 had been the security of property established a commission in 1886 to buy Polish land for German settlement and later took powers of compulsory purchase against Polish owners as such. I have not researched those statutes and have therefore not used them, but a reader should know that the sharpest available test of

where this order's protections stopped operating is one this module has not performed. And the Kulturkampf, in which bishops were imprisoned and dioceses left vacant under a constitution guaranteeing religious freedom, is the second such test and is likewise absent.

IT NO LONGER STANDS BEHIND YOUR MAJESTY

Change and collapse: the rising that walked into an intact floor and lost, the general who told an emperor the army was no longer his, and the twenty-seven years between the fall of the monarch and the destruction of the men the monarchy had been built around

The rule, and why it is not cynicism

An order of this kind is a settlement among people who command organised force, about who owns what. It follows, without any need for a theory of history, that it can only be altered by people who command organised force. The tenant farmer, the estate labourer, the journeyman, the mill hand and the outcast are not among them, however many of them there are and however angry they get, because an intact army with an intact officer corps beats an unarmed crowd with a regularity that comes very close to a law.

So the changes that matter come from four directions, and all four are inside or above the hierarchy rather than beneath it. The elite *fractures*, and one faction arms the people against the other. The elite *exhausts* its floor in a great-power war and has to pay whoever is left. The elite is *conquered* by a rival elite and remade at bayonet point. Or the elite *overbreeds*, producing more claimants than it can seat, until the surplus turns and leads the crowd as fuel.

The common man is present at every opening — as soldier, as crowd, as the weight one broken faction swings — and never as its author. That is not a slight on him. It is an observation about who holds the rifles.

Prussia is unusually good for testing this, because it supplies a clean instance of each of the four in a single lineage, and because its ending is peculiar: the monarch went in 1918 and the class the monarchy had been built around went on, intact and prospering, for another twenty-seven years, until it was destroyed by an army that was not German.

1848: the rising against an intact floor

In March 1848 the news from Paris reached Berlin, the crowds assembled, and on the eighteenth there was serious fighting in the streets with hundreds of dead. The

King ordered the troops out of the city, promised a constitution, and rode through Berlin wearing the revolution's colours. A Prussian national assembly met and set about drafting.

Then look at what the floor actually did, because the whole of the module's argument is visible in eight months.

Not one line regiment went over. The army withdrew from Berlin because the King ordered it to withdraw, which is a decision and not a defeat, and it remained under its officers, intact, in barracks outside the capital, throughout the summer while the assembly debated. On 1 November the King appointed a counter-revolutionary ministry under his own uncle. On 9 November the assembly was prorogued and ordered to move to the town of Brandenburg. It refused. General von Wrangel then marched into Berlin, disarmed the civic guard, proclaimed a state of siege, dissolved the assembly's sittings by force on 15 November, banned the political clubs, and stayed. On 5 December the King dissolved the assembly altogether and octroyed a constitution of his own.

The most useful description of the decisive day was written by a hostile witness. Wrangel, says Engels, came to the gates of Berlin at the head of his men expecting every street barricaded and every window turned into a loophole, as he and all his officers had confidently anticipated; and he found the gates open, and in the streets nothing but peaceable Berlin citizens delighting in the joke they had played on him by delivering themselves up, bound hand and foot, to the astonished soldiers.

That is what a rising against an intact floor looks like from the inside. It is not that the crowd was crushed in a battle; it is that there was no battle, because there was nothing to fight with. The assembly had no force. The civic guard was a militia the regulars disarmed in an afternoon. And the twelve to forty thousand men who walked in — the figures differ — were the same army, under the same officers, that had been there in March.

Two refinements matter, and the second is the more important.

The first is that the *content* of 1848 was not nothing. The revolution extracted a written constitution with a substantial catalogue of rights, and that document, revised, governed Prussia until 1918. So the crowd's pressure did real work. What it did not do was determine which of its clauses would operate, and the demonstration is that the same King who granted the charter issued, by ordinance in May 1849, the three-class franchise that made the chamber elected under it safe. **A rising can extract a document. Only the hierarchy decides which parts of it work**, because that is settled afterwards, in the enabling legislation, by people the rising did not remove.

The second refinement is about timing, and it is a finding rather than a qualification. Why did the counter-revolution move in November and not in June? Contemporary accounts point at something specific: democratic ideas were beginning to appear inside the army, with several hundred soldiers at a time attending the meetings of democratic clubs in Berlin, and the assembly had voted that it should be a point of honour for conservative officers to resign their commissions. The last reliable pillar of the monarchy was showing hairline cracks.

That is the moment the hierarchy struck. Not when the crowd was largest, but when its own instrument began to be uncertain. **A counter-revolution's timing is a report on the state of the elite, not on the state of the streets**, and a study that reads it as a response to popular pressure will misdate the whole episode.

1806: the crack that came from outside

The most thoroughgoing structural change in Prussian history was not made by any Prussian. In October 1806 a French army destroyed the Prussian army in an afternoon; the state lost half its territory; and the reforms that followed — the opening of the land market, the ending of hereditary subjection, the municipal ordinance, the reorganisation of the army and the abolition of the noble monopoly of commissions in principle — were carried out by an administration working under the guns of an occupying power, against the resistance of the very class whose privileges they touched.

That is the conquest crack, and its lesson is uncomfortable: this order was capable of reforming itself only after somebody else had broken it. The reforms did not follow from any internal fracture, any fiscal exhaustion or any pressure from below. They followed from a defeat, and a good many of them were quietly reversed once the emergency passed — the declaration of 1816 excluding the smallest cultivators from the land settlement being the clearest instance.

1862–66: fracture attempted, fracture absorbed

The second crack, elite fracture, was genuinely available in the 1860s and did not open, and the reason has been set out elsewhere in this study. The liberal majority in the Prussian chamber had the budget power, used it against the army reorganisation, and was governed over for four years by a minister who declared the constitution silent on the point. Then, in the summer after Königgrätz, the same chamber passed a bill retroactively legalising four years of unbudgeted government.

They did not fold because they were cowards. They folded because the arrangement was simultaneously delivering the whole material content of their position — a

national state, a national market, careers, and order — and to break it they would have had to prefer a constitutional principle to all of that. A faction cannot fracture an order that is paying it.

1918: the exhaustion, and who delivered the verdict

The third crack is exhaustion, and here the framework's prediction and the documented event coincide so exactly that the module hardly has to argue.

By the autumn of 1918 the war was lost, the army was retreating, the fleet had mutinied at Kiel, and councils of workers and soldiers had taken control in the cities. On 9 November the Kaiser, at headquarters in Spa, proposed to lead the army home and restore order with it — which is what the floor of force is for and what it had done in 1848. Wilhelm Groener, First Quartermaster-General for barely a fortnight, told him that the army would march home in calm and order,

aber nicht unter dem Befehl Eurer Majestät, denn es steht nicht mehr hinter Eurer Majestät.

but not under the command of Your Majesty, for it no longer stands behind Your Majesty.

The Emperor abdicated. And the very next day, 10 November, Groener telephoned Friedrich Ebert in Berlin and made an agreement whose terms are the most instructive thing in this whole module. The high command would support the new provisional government and act with it against the radical left. In return, command authority over the troops would remain with the officer corps, whose internal discipline and structure the government undertook not to disturb.

Read that transaction slowly. The component of the state that had been insulated from ministerial responsibility since the 1880s — the command channel personal to the monarch, holding officer personnel inside it, answerable to no assembly — used its insulation, first to inform the monarch that he no longer held it, and then, within twenty-four hours, to sell its services to the men who had replaced him, on terms that preserved its own autonomy intact.

The second sovereign was not overthrown in 1918. It changed customers.

That is the framework's proposition about insulated components with independent instruments of force, confirmed in the sharpest possible form, and it also answers the question of what the sailors and the workers and the councils actually did. They made continuing as before too expensive. They did not decide what would be sold to satisfy them. **The ruled set the price; the hierarchy chooses what to sell** — and what it

sold, in November 1918, was the most conspicuous and least load-bearing item it possessed.

The Kaiser had not exercised the command authority in any real sense for two years; the supreme command had. He was the visible apex of the arrangement and, by then, structurally almost inert. Selling him cost the officer corps nothing and bought it the protection of the incoming government against the very councils that had forced the crisis. **When a hierarchy under pressure has to give something up, it gives up the component that is most visible and least structural, and the tell that this has happened is that the visible thing goes while the load-bearing members are untouched.**

What actually changed, and what did not

Set out the 1918 balance sheet and the pattern is unmistakable.

Gone: the monarchy; the empire; the three-class franchise, which had held since 1849 and vanished in the November revolution; the manorial districts as units of local administration; and, in due course, a good deal of the confessional and educational apparatus.

Not gone: the officer corps, whose command over its own troops was guaranteed by the pact of 10 November and which emerged as an army under the direct jurisdiction of the Reich President rather than of any ministry — the same insulation, transplanted. The civil service, which continued substantially unpurged. The judiciary, likewise. And, decisively for this study, **the estates.**

The republic legislated for land settlement and achieved very little of it. The great East Elbian properties came through the revolution essentially intact, still held by the same families, still supplying officers, still receiving tariff protection, and — through the state assistance programmes for the eastern provinces in the later 1920s — still receiving public money to keep them solvent, on the same logic that had produced the tariff of 1879 in the first place. When the republic ended in January 1933, the men around the aged Field Marshal who was then Reich President included a substantial East Elbian agrarian interest, and its position in that circle was a straight inheritance from the arrangement described throughout this study.

So the plainest statement of what happened in 1918 is this: **a revolution removed the monarch and left the settlement standing.** The Junker survived the fall of the king he had spent three centuries being bound to, which is only surprising if one thinks the king was what the arrangement was about.

1945: the fourth act, performed by strangers

The thing that ended the East Elbian order did not come from any German quarter. It came in with the Red Army.

In September 1945 the Soviet occupation zone enacted land reform ordinances providing for the expropriation, without compensation, of all landed property over one hundred hectares, together with the land of war criminals and of active National Socialist functionaries regardless of size, and the property of the former German Reich. The expropriated land went into local land funds and was redistributed to landless and land-poor peasants, agricultural labourers, small tenants and the resettled. From the autumn of 1945 the former owners were expelled from their home districts; a considerable number were interned in special camps, in several cases former concentration camps, irrespective of their political records.

The campaign slogan was *Junkerland in Bauernhand* — Junker land into peasant hands.

The first distribution was staged as a ceremony. On the meadow of the manor park at Plänitz in the district of Ruppín, title deeds were handed to sixty applicants: twenty-two land-poor peasants and labourers, eight artisans, three new settlers and thirteen resettled persons from Plänitz itself, and fourteen more land-poor peasants and labourers from Neustadt an der Dosse. The first certificate — eight hectares of arable and one of meadow — went to a settler named Ernst Paris, the father of eleven children.

And on 25 February 1947 the Allied Control Council, by law, abolished the State of Prussia.

That is the conquest crack, and it is the only one of the four that reached this settlement's foundations. It did so because the conquering power arrived with a doctrine that specifically required the destruction of a landowning class — a warrant that named the thing to be removed — and with an army in occupation to execute it. No internal fracture had ever produced anything of the kind. The republic of 1918 had not attempted it; the regime after 1933 had not attempted it; both had, in their different ways, subsidised it.

One detail deserves to be held up, because it closes a circle this study opened three hundred years earlier. The Soviet decree did not abolish the nobility, or titles, or lineage. It expropriated **holdings over one hundred hectares**. The Prussian settlement's boundary marker had been, since the seventeenth century, not a bloodline but a registered parcel of land — only the possessor of a noble estate could have subjects — and the instrument that finally dissolved it was, correspondingly, a threshold measured in hectares.

A settlement bounded by a marker is destroyed by a rule about that marker. Whoever comes to dismantle an arrangement does not have to understand it; he has only to find the thing it is attached to. That is the last and most useful thing this order has to teach about its own ending.

Reading change against the framework

A rising against an intact floor does not lose a battle; it fails to have one. Wrangel entered Berlin in November 1848 expecting barricades and found open gates and amused citizens. Not one Prussian regiment went over; the civic guard was disarmed in an afternoon; the assembly did not resist. **Where a study finds a revolution that ended without serious fighting, it should not conclude that the crowd lost its nerve** — it should establish whether there was ever any organised force on the crowd's side, and the answer is nearly always that there was not.

Read the timing of a counter-revolution as a report on the elite, not on the streets. The Prussian counter-stroke came in November, not in the summer when the crowds were largest, and what had changed in the interval was that soldiers were attending democratic clubs and the assembly had invited conservative officers to resign. The hierarchy moved when its own instrument became uncertain. **The date on which an order strikes back tells you when it began to doubt its own army**, and that is a far more useful datum than the size of any demonstration.

The ruled set the price; the hierarchy chooses what to sell. This is the honest form of the objection that popular pressure is a real cause even though it is never the proximate agent. In 1848 the pressure bought a charter and the hierarchy chose the franchise; in 1918 the pressure bought a republic and the hierarchy chose to surrender the monarch. **In neither case did the people who applied the pressure select the concession**, and the framework should keep the two operations separate: the crowd changes an elite's cost column, and the elite then decides which of its own components is cheapest to give up.

And it gives up the most visible and least structural. By 1918 the Kaiser was the conspicuous apex of an arrangement in which he had not exercised the command authority for two years. Selling him satisfied the street, cost the officer corps nothing, and purchased the new government's protection against the councils. **The diagnostic is the balance sheet on the morning after: if the ornamental apex is gone and the load-bearing members — the officer corps, the bureaucracy, the courts, the land — are untouched, the settlement has not changed, it has been repriced.**

An insulated component with its own instrument of force does not fall with the apex; it changes customers. The command channel that had been fenced off from

ministerial responsibility since the 1880s informed the Emperor on 9 November that the army no longer stood behind him, and on 10 November contracted with his successors to keep its autonomy in exchange for suppressing their enemies. **Where an order contains such a component, do not expect it to go down with the ship. Expect it to negotiate,** and expect the negotiation to occur within days, because the component's value to the incoming power is highest at the moment of maximum disorder and declines thereafter.

Some components can only be removed by an outside apex carrying a warrant that names them. The East Elbian estate order survived a lost war, a revolution, a republic and a dictatorship. It was destroyed in a season by a foreign army whose governing doctrine specifically required the destruction of a landowning class. **Where a settlement's load-bearing member has survived every internal crisis, stop looking for the internal mechanism that will finally remove it. There may not be one** — and the framework should be willing to record that some arrangements are simply not dismantlable from within, and end only when somebody else arrives with both an army and a reason.

Finally: a settlement is destroyed by a rule about the marker that defined it. Prussian noble standing had run with a registered parcel since the seventeenth century — only the possessor of a noble estate could have subjects — and the decree that ended it in 1945 named a hectare threshold and nothing else. **Identify a settlement's inside-outside marker and you have identified the instrument by which it will eventually be destroyed,** because a dismantler does not need to understand an arrangement; he only needs to find the thing it hangs from.

A note on sources. Groener's words to Wilhelm II on 9 November 1918 are quoted in the German as they are reproduced in the scholarly literature on the Ebert–Groener agreement; the translation is my own. The terms of the agreement of 10 November — the high command's support for the provisional government against the radical left, in exchange for the government's undertaking not to interfere with the officer corps' command authority and internal discipline — follow the standard accounts. Engels's description of Wrangel's entry into Berlin is quoted, in paraphrase rather than in extended quotation, from *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany*; it is a hostile source and I have used it because a hostile witness describing his own side's failure to resist is the most reliable kind of testimony available on that point, but readers should treat the figure of forty thousand men with caution, since other accounts give around twelve thousand.

The sequence of the Prussian counter-revolution — the ministry of 1 November 1848, the prorogation of 9 November and removal to Brandenburg, Wrangel's entry,

the state of siege, the dissolution of the assembly's sittings on 15 November and its final dissolution with the octroyed constitution on 5 December — follows the standard German accounts. The observation that democratic ideas were penetrating the army, with soldiers attending democratic club meetings, and that the assembly had resolved to make it a point of honour for conservative officers to resign, is from the German press and reference literature on the revolution's Berlin phase and is the weakest-sourced element of that section; it is load-bearing for the argument about timing and should be checked against the military records before the claim is relied on.

The Soviet zone land reform ordinances of early September 1945 — expropriation without compensation of all holdings over one hundred hectares, of the land of war criminals and active National Socialist functionaries regardless of size, and of the property of the former Reich; transfer to local land funds and redistribution; expulsion of former owners from their home districts from the autumn of 1945; internment of a considerable number in special camps — are as reported in the German reference and educational literature. The Pläntz ceremony and the details of the sixty recipients, including Ernst Paris and his eight hectares of arable and one of meadow, are from a contemporary account reproduced in that literature. The Allied Control Council law abolishing the State of Prussia is dated 25 February 1947; I have not read its text.

Several things are stated here at the level of the standard narrative and were not researched for this module; they are flagged rather than dressed up. The Weimar republic's land settlement legislation and its meagre results; the state assistance programmes for the eastern provinces in the later 1920s and the scandal attaching to them; the composition of the circle around the Reich President in January 1933 and the weight of the East Elbian agrarian interest within it; the survival of the imperial civil service and judiciary into the republic; and the constitutional position of the Reichswehr under the Reich President — all of these are given as they are generally reported and all of them would need proper documentary work before the argument built on them could be called established. They are used here because the shape of the argument does not depend on their details, but a reader should know which parts of this module rest on documents and which on received account.

I have also given no figures for the extent of the 1945 expropriation — the number of estates, the hectares transferred, the number of new holdings created — because the figures in circulation vary and I could not settle them. The absence is deliberate; a module about the destruction of a landed class ought to be able to say how much land, and this one cannot.

TWO HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FIVE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND SIX

The grim accounting: the metabolic note called twice by armies rather than by soil, the debt repaid in imported people, the famine the magazines absorbed, and the province where the machinery worked and the people died anyway

What is being counted, and why it has to be

An arrangement of this age becomes, to the people living inside it, simply the way the world is. By 1871 a Prussian schoolboy learning his catechism from a Halle-certified schoolmaster in a village his family had worked for two hundred years was not living inside a settlement. He was living inside reality. The manorial court, the regiment, the tax roll and the name of his country were the furniture of the world, and nothing in his formation would have suggested that any of them had a beginning.

They had a beginning, and the beginning was violent. This module sets out the bill.

Two ledgers are kept. The **sword** ledger counts the deaths produced by weapons: the conquest, the wars fought to build and hold the arrangement, and the killing done at its edges. The **metabolic** ledger counts something less visible and often larger. A society that coordinates — that stores grain, moves it, drains land, settles colonists, organises labour — supports a population the same ground would not carry without the coordination. That surplus population is a standing debt against the coordination continuing. When war, conquest or collapse breaks the coordination, the note is called, and it is paid in famine and epidemic rather than in battle.

The second ledger is the one an accounting of this order most needs, because Prussia turns out to be a case where it was called twice, where it was serviced in an unusual currency, and where it was once, spectacularly, *not* called when it should have been.

The note called before the order existed

The founding of the Hohenzollern state sits on the far side of a demographic catastrophe that the founders did not cause and inherited.

Brandenburg lost, on the estimates usually given, between a third and a half of its population in the Thirty Years' War, with individual districts far worse; Berlin at the end of it counted about six thousand people. That is the metabolic ledger of a *previous* arrangement, called by the disruption of coordination across central Europe, and it was paid before the Great Elector took his oath in 1640.

The finding is worth stating cleanly because it will not recur in this collection often: **this order was founded on ground where the note had already been called.** Its first task was not extraction but repopulation, and the settlement recorded in the recess of 1653 says so — remissions of arrears wholesale for the years the country lay waste, six years free of dues for anyone taking up an abandoned holding in the electoral demesnes, and permission to settle foreigners on the empty places since it benefits the estates too.

And called again, a lifetime in

The second calling is better documented and is the module's central event.

In 1656, during the Great Elector's own Northern War, Tatar cavalry allied to Poland entered East Prussia. The commonly cited figures are thirty-four thousand people carried off into slavery and a further eighty thousand dead of the epidemics that followed. That is over a hundred thousand people, in a province of perhaps six hundred thousand, as a by-product of the war by which the founder purchased his sovereignty.

Fifty years later the same province was destroyed a second time, and the sequence is the metabolic ledger in its textbook form.

The winter of 1708–09 was the coldest in living memory — the millennium winter — and produced a failed harvest and famine in 1709. Plague, travelling the Baltic with the armies and shipping of the Great Northern War, crossed the Prussian frontier near Hohenstein in August 1708; four hundred people died in that small town within two months. The population fled into the woods. Königsberg was sealed off for five weeks in the winter of 1709 and the blockade lifted on 21 December; between nine and ten thousand of its forty thousand inhabitants died, a quarter of the city, in a matter of months. The epidemic burned out in 1710.

The figures for the province are these. East Prussia had something between six hundred thousand and seven hundred thousand people. Between two hundred thousand and two hundred and fifty thousand of them died — more than a third. In a country where the normal annual death toll ran at about fifteen thousand, something like two hundred and thirty thousand died in three years.

One source gives the administrative count: **235,806.**

That number deserves to be looked at, because of what it is. It is not an estimate by a historian. It is a state's own tally of its dead subjects, arrived at by the same apparatus that counted hearths for the regiments and hides for the tax rolls, and it is precise to the single person. An order that can count its dead to six figures is an order that had been counting the living for the same reason, and the accuracy is a by-product of extraction rather than of grief.

The physical residue is in the same registers. Ten thousand eight hundred and thirty-four peasant farms in East Prussia stood empty. Of those, eight thousand four hundred and eleven were in the districts of Insterburg, Ragnit, Tilsit and Memel alone, and Insterburg by itself accounted for four thousand six hundred and twenty. Around Gumbinnen there was scarcely a peasantry left. And this, note, is the same country whose last Old Prussian speakers died in these years, so that a language that had been in that soil since before the crusade ended in the same three winters.

The debt serviced in imported people

What a state does after such an event is the most revealing thing about it, and Prussia's answer was neither prayer nor patience. It was recruitment.

The *Rétablissement* began under Frederick I, who settled Swiss colonists around Gumbinnen as early as 1709, while the plague was still burning. Frederick William I pursued repopulation with the same energy he gave the army: an immigration patent in 1721 drew Palatines, Rhinelanders, Dutch, Swiss, Bohemians and French; and in 1732, when the Archbishop of Salzburg expelled his Protestant subjects, Prussia issued an invitation patent and took in some twenty thousand of them, settling the greater part in the emptied country around Gumbinnen.

Two observations follow, and both matter.

The first is why. A state whose revenue rested on hearths and hides and whose army was recruited by apportioning cantons among regiments could not wait a generation for natural increase; every empty farm was a hearth off a regimental roll and a hide off a tax list. **Where a state repairs a demographic catastrophe by importing people rather than by waiting, the reason is usually in its extraction system,** and the speed of the repair measures how tightly its revenue was coupled to the count of bodies.

The second is who. The Swiss, the Palatines, the Bohemians and above all the Salzburger were Protestants. The famous Prussian doctrine of toleration, whose operative clause in the King's own hand was that if Turks and heathens came and wanted *to populate the land* he would build them mosques, was in these decades doing precisely the work it was written for. The tolerance was real. It was also a recruitment instrument, and this is the ledger where the recruitment shows up.

The famine that was not paid for

Now the counter-instance, which is the most important single fact in this module and cuts hard against the direction the module has been running.

Between 1770 and 1772 a chain of failed harvests produced a general subsistence crisis across central Europe. Grain prices multiplied several times over. Saxony, Bohemia, Bavaria and Switzerland suffered heavy mortality; states closed their borders to grain exports and made the shortage worse for their neighbours; disease followed the people who moved in search of food, and dysentery, typhus and plague spread through the crisis years. In Bohemia and Saxony the deaths ran into the tens and hundreds of thousands.

Prussia had built, over two generations, a system of state grain magazines. Their purpose was military: an army of eighty thousand marching in a poor country cannot live off it, so the state stockpiled, and the establishment of magazines and the regulation of purchase and sale were a standing charge on the administration, monitored monthly and quarterly on the Great Elector's own instructions to his heir.

In 1771 and 1772 those magazines were opened. The judgement of the German biographical literature is unqualified: only by means of such stockpiling could the terrible famine of 1771–72 be caught.

Hold that against everything else in this study. The apparatus that pressed a third of the country's product out of it, that entered noble fields with a measuring rod, that assigned every hearth to a regiment and every boy to a roll at confirmation, was also the apparatus that had grain in store when the harvest failed and a bureaucracy capable of moving it. **The coordination that lifts a population above what the land would carry, and thereby creates the metabolic debt, is the same coordination that services the debt while it functions.**

That is not a defence of the arrangement and it is not a set-off against the ledger. It is a correction to how the ledger should be read. The metabolic note is not called by extraction. It is called by the *interruption* of coordination — and in this case the interruptions were caused by armies and epidemics, while the coordination itself, in the one great test it faced in peacetime, held.

Except where it did not reach

And now the case that shows what the exception looks like.

In the winter of 1847–48 the districts of Rybnik and Pleß in Upper Silesia — inside the Prussian state, inside its administration, inside its road and magazine system — went hungry after successive failed harvests and the potato blight. The poor population

fell back on clover, grass and mushrooms. Hunger typhus broke out and spread west through the districts of Cosel and Leobschütz into the early months of 1848.

The government sent a young physician to report. Rudolf Virchow spent three weeks in Rybnik and Pleß, and what he sent back was not a medical report in the sense his employers expected. He described a population living in single-room wooden huts in chronic malnutrition, without schooling, without local self-government, without a press, and dependent on a landowning and clerical order that had no interest in changing any of it. His conclusion — that the epidemic was a product of the conditions, and that the remedies were political rather than pharmaceutical — is the founding document of social medicine, and it was written by a man the Prussian state had itself commissioned.

Estimates of the dead vary widely and I will not pretend to settle them. The point that survives the uncertainty is structural. In 1771 the machinery worked and a famine was absorbed. In 1847 the machinery existed, was not broken, was not at war, and a province of the same state starved. **The signature of administrative killing is a death toll inside a functioning apparatus** — and the place to look is never the year the machine failed, but the districts it did not reach and the reasons it did not.

The sword

The sword ledger is more familiar and can be given more briefly, but it should be given in order, because the cumulative shape is the point.

The conquest, 1230–1283: fifty-three years, two general risings, and an Old Prussian population reduced by something in the region of half over the first century of the war, on the estimates in the literature — figures which should be treated as an order of magnitude and not a measurement.

The founding wars: the Northern Wars of the 1650s, in which the Great Elector bought his sovereignty and the Tatar raid described above was one of the bills; the wars of the 1670s; the campaigns of the Spanish Succession, for which the crown itself was purchased with eight thousand men.

The Silesian wars and the Seven Years' War, 1740–1763: the great haemorrhage of the eighteenth century. Prussia is usually reckoned to have lost on the order of ten per cent of its population across the Seven Years' War, military and civilian together, out of something under five million; provinces were fought across repeatedly, and the King's own account has him spending the increased revenue of the conquered province on more army. The province of Silesia, which was the object, cost more lives to hold than it contained taxpayers to justify — a calculation nobody in the eighteenth century performed.

The Napoleonic wars, the destruction of 1806 and the campaigns of 1813–15.

The wars of unification, 1864, 1866 and 1870–71 — short, decisive, and by the standards of what preceded and followed them, cheap.

The war of 1914–1918, in which the German dead ran to something around two million, of whom the Prussian provinces supplied the largest part, and in which the metabolic note was called one last time by blockade and by the collapse of agricultural coordination: the turnip winter of 1916–17, and civilian excess mortality which the German official inquiry of 1928 put at something over four hundred thousand and which later scholarship has revised in both directions. That figure is contested and I record it as contested.

And the ledger nobody keeps. Two entries belong in an accounting of this state and are almost never in one.

The Brandenburg African Company, chartered by the Great Elector in 1682, shipped somewhere in the region of nineteen to twenty thousand human beings across the Atlantic to be sold in the Caribbean, and its Gold Coast holdings were liquidated for about seven thousand ducats and twelve people. Those deaths — in the barracoons, on the crossings, on the plantations — are in nobody's Prussian total.

And in German South West Africa in 1904–1908, an army officered on the Prussian model, under a general who issued a written order that the Herero were no longer German subjects and that any found within the territory would be fired upon, drove a people into waterless country and sealed the wells behind them. The Herero population is usually given as around eighty thousand before the war and perhaps fifteen thousand after; the Nama losses at something like ten thousand. That is the largest single act of killing in this order's record and it was performed almost entirely by an administrative decision rather than by battle — which is precisely the category the framework says a modernising state's accounting will otherwise miss.

Reading the accounting against the framework

The metabolic ledger tracks the disruption of coordination, and in a European state of this period the disruption is almost always an army. Prussia's two great die-offs — the Thirty Years' War and the catastrophe of 1656 and 1708–11 — were not the collision of a population with an ecological ceiling. They were the collision of a population with soldiers: armies seizing supply, Tatar cavalry carrying off a province's people, and plague travelling the Baltic with the shipping of a great-power war, on top of a harvest failure produced by an exceptional winter. **Date the interruption, not the mortality** — the deaths arrive one to three years after the coordination breaks, and an accounting that dates the event by the burials will attribute it to nature.

Where the note is called before an order is founded, the order's first act is recruitment, and its extraction system is the reason. The Hohenzollerns inherited an emptied country twice over and answered both times by importing people — Swiss into Gumbinnen while the plague still burned, then Palatines, Bohemians and twenty thousand Salzburgers. A state whose revenue is counted in hearths and whose army is recruited by hearth cannot wait for natural increase. **The speed with which a state repopulates measures how tightly its revenue is coupled to bodies,** and the confessional or ethnic filter on whom it recruits will tell you what else it is buying at the same time.

And the same coordination that creates the metabolic debt services it. This is the correction the module owes the framework. In 1771–72 the grain magazines built to victual an army were opened and a European subsistence crisis that killed heavily across Saxony, Bohemia, Bavaria and Switzerland was absorbed in Prussia. **The apparatus of extraction is also an apparatus of insurance, and the catastrophe comes not when it operates but when it stops.** The ledger against an order is therefore not the sum of what it took; it is the sum of what happened when the taking machinery broke, plus what happened in the places it never reached.

Which locates the administrative killing exactly. Prop 24 holds — an accounting confined to the sword badly undercounts this order — but the killing is not where one first looks. It is not in the canton system's attrition, which cannot be quantified, and not principally in the wars. It is in Upper Silesia in 1847–48, where a province of a functioning state, not at war, with magazines and roads and an administration, ate grass and died of hunger typhus, and where the state's own investigator reported that the causes were political. **Look for the death toll inside a working apparatus** — the districts the machinery did not reach, and the reasons it did not, which are always about who was thought to be worth reaching.

And the largest single entry is an order in writing. The extermination order in South West Africa killed more people, more deliberately, than any battle this state ever fought, and it did so by administrative means: a declaration of non-subjecthood, a line on a map, and the sealing of wells. That is what a modernising state's principal killing looks like, and it does not appear in any casualty list because there was no engagement to list it under.

A last note on the forgetting, which is where this module began. The measure of it available here is the name. The state took its name from a Baltic people conquered between 1230 and 1283, whose language survived the conquest by four hundred years and died in the plague years of 1709 to 1711 — in the same winters, in the same province, in the same registers as the two hundred and thirty-five thousand. Within a

generation of that a king was propagating the word deliberately, in his own account, to teach officers from four separated provinces that they were one body; and within a century and a half it meant a virtue. **The completeness of a forgetting can sometimes be measured by what a word has come to mean.**

A note on sources. The figures for the plague of 1708–11 in East Prussia are those given in the German reference and archival literature: a provincial population of six to seven hundred thousand, deaths of two hundred thousand to two hundred and fifty thousand, more than a third; a normal annual mortality of about fifteen thousand; between nine and ten thousand dead of Königsberg's forty thousand, a quarter of the city; the sealing of Königsberg for five weeks with the blockade lifted on 21 December 1709; and 10,834 deserted peasant farms in the province, of which 8,411 in the districts of Insterburg, Ragnit, Tilsit and Memel and 4,620 in Insterburg alone. The precise figure of 235,806 is given in one German chronicle source and I have not been able to trace it to the original return; I have used it because a state's own six-figure count is analytically significant and I have said what it is, but it should not be relied on as an audited number. The 1656 figures — thirty-four thousand carried into slavery and eighty thousand dead of disease — come from the same body of regional literature and are of the same order of reliability.

The *Rétablissement* details — Swiss colonists at Gumbinnen from 1709, the immigration patent of 1721, the invitation patent of 1732 and about twenty thousand Salzburg Protestants settled mainly around Gumbinnen — are from the German reference literature. The judgement that only the state grain magazines allowed the famine of 1771–72 to be absorbed is from the *Deutsche Biographie* article on Frederick II; the comparative mortality in Saxony, Bohemia, Bavaria and Switzerland is from regional accounts of the same crisis, and I have deliberately not given figures for it because those I found were not comparable. The Upper Silesian hunger typhus of 1847–48 in the districts of Rybnik and Pleß, spreading to Cosel and Leobschütz, and Virchow's mission there in 1848, are as reported in the German regional literature; the characterisation of his report follows the standard account and I have not read the report.

Several entries in the sword ledger are given at the level of received account and are flagged as such. The Old Prussian population loss over the first century of the conquest, at around half, was already given as an order of magnitude in the opening of this study. The Prussian population loss in the Seven Years' War, at around a tenth, and the German military dead of 1914–18, at around two million, are the usual figures and are contested at the margins. The German civilian excess mortality attributed to the blockade, at something over four hundred thousand on the German official inquiry of

1928, is seriously contested and I have said so. The Brandenburg African Company figures were given as a range in the earlier module on the cost column and are the least secure numbers in this study.

The South West African entry is the one I am least comfortable presenting on this basis. The Herero pre-war population of around eighty thousand with perhaps fifteen thousand survivors, and Nama losses of around ten thousand, are the figures generally reported, and the existence and character of the extermination order of October 1904 are not in dispute; but I have not researched this episode for this module, the demographic estimates are contested in the specialist literature, and the campaign's place in an accounting of *Prussia* as opposed to imperial Germany deserves an argument I have not made here. It is included because leaving out the largest single act of killing in this order's record would falsify the ledger, and flagged because including it on received figures is not the same as establishing it.

Two gaps. I have given no figure for the Thirty Years' War losses beyond the range of a third to a half stated at the opening of this study, because the estimates rest on fragmentary parish material. And I have not attempted the eighteenth-century canton system's peacetime attrition — the men who died of disease in garrison, of the gauntlet, or in the marches — because I could find no basis for a figure, and an accounting that guesses is worse than one that admits a hole.

FINANCE, WAR AND DOMAINS

Convergence and divergence: what this order shares with places it never heard of, what is peculiar to it, what travelled when it was copied and what stayed behind — and the strongest case for the defence, stated in full and answered

The case, in one paragraph

A crusading order conquered a Baltic people between 1230 and 1283 and could not rent their obedience because they had none pooled to rent; it therefore imported settlers on written liberties. Three hundred years later, in a country emptied by plague and war and enriched by a Baltic grain price, the descendants of those settlers were legislated downward by an assembly of their own landlords. A Franconian house that had bought the neighbouring march from a bankrupt emperor inherited the country in 1618, was ruined in the Thirty Years' War, and from 1640 built an army it could not afford by selling its nobility confirmations of things they already had. In 1717 it bought out that nobility's ancient obligation to ride, and in the same year took their sons into a royal school at twelve. It licensed the men who taught its villagers rather than writing what they were taught. It ran four different stories to four audiences at once. It made its command authority answerable to nobody, to keep it from a parliament, and two centuries later the men inside that fence were governing. The monarch fell in 1918 and the settlement stood; it was destroyed in 1945 by a foreign army carrying a doctrine that named the class to be removed, and the instrument was a rule about hectares.

That is the case. This module asks what it shares with orders that never heard of it, what is peculiar to it, what happened when somebody copied it, and whether the defence is right.

Convergence

The framework's claim about convergence is that a position poses a problem with only a few good answers, and that unconnected orders facing like positions therefore arrive at like solutions without contact, imitation or any hand above their heads. Prussia supplies four instances.

The martial elite over bound labour. The structural rhyme with Sparta is real and unmistakable — a conquering warrior class living on the product of a subordinated agricultural population, taking its name from the conquered, and organising its whole

life around arms. What the research established is that the rhyme is a rhyme and not a descent: the conquest of the 1230s produced free hereditary tenures, and the binding came two and a half centuries later, from a grain price and a diet. Two orders arrived at the same shape by wholly different routes, which is exactly what the framework predicts and exactly what a theory of cultural transmission cannot explain.

The absent chair. The question of whether a conquered order contains a seat a stranger can occupy — an office, as against a bloodline or a distributed authority — separates the cheap conquests in this collection from the ruinous ones. Old Prussia had no seat, and the cost was fifty-three years and two general risings. That converges precisely with the case where a conquering power found a durable, believed, self-running order with no capturable apex and had to forge one, and paid for the forgery in permanent policing. What this case adds is an upstream variable nobody had named: an order that consumes each man's estate at his funeral cannot grow an office, because an office is an inheritable position. Ask what happens to a dead man's property and you have predicted whether there will be a chair.

The robe cut for the funder. The colonial cases in this collection find a legitimating story addressed not to the conquered but to the metropole that pays and mans the conquest. Bernard of Clairvaux's letter of 1147 — until, with the Lord's help, either their rite or their nation be blotted out — is that document in pure form, written to German princes about Slavs who would never read it, six centuries before the conquests where the pattern was first identified. The colonial bend is not a property of modern empire or of European peoples. It is a property of distance between a floor and its paymaster, and it appears wherever that distance appears.

And the recursion. The crusaders who forbade the Prussians to burn their dead were the descendants of Saxons to whom Charlemagne's capitulary had forbidden the same practice, on pain of death, four hundred and sixty years earlier. A conquered creed had become, in that interval, the furniture of reality for the children of the conquered, who then carried it outward as self-evident truth. That is the framework's claim about naturalisation, with a measurable interval attached.

Divergence

Five things are unusual about this case and each is a finding rather than a colour.

It was founded on a broken apparatus, not an intact one. The collection had a case of a founding on a working machine and needed the opposite. The Great Elector inherited a wrecked and half-emptied country, and the consequence is counterintuitive: it was *easier*, not harder. There were no creditors of the previous order demanding payment, no incumbent coordination to capture and no rival apparatus to displace.

There was empty land, a nobility whose privileges cost nothing to confirm because they already held them, and a legal form — soldiering as a standing charge — that had never existed and could therefore be created without dispossessing anybody.

The settlement's boundary was a thing, not a bloodline. Only the possessor of a noble estate could, as a rule, have subjects. Rank ran by birth; power over other human beings ran with a registered parcel. That made the arrangement cheap to defend, because a chancery can watch twelve thousand parcels and cannot watch a nation's marriages — and it made the arrangement cheap to destroy, because in 1945 a decree naming a hectare threshold dissolved in a season what no internal crisis had touched in three hundred years.

The consideration was repurchased, not deleted. The medieval enfeoffment bought armed service and installed a permanent civil-war risk in the same clause. The colonial enfeoffment deletes the service clause and leaves a disarmed dependant who must then be policed forever. Prussia did a third thing in a single year: bought the service out for cash in January 1717 and re-hired the same families' sons as salaried officers in September. The retinue was abolished and the fighting men were the same men. That is why this nobility was simultaneously the most militarised in Europe and the least capable of rebellion.

Legitimacy was minted where it could not be borrowed. The rule is that legitimacy is borrowed and never minted, and that a forged apex carries no warrant. Prussia locates the exception. Toward its Lutheran subjects the Calvinist dynasty borrowed, because it had to. Toward Europe it purchased, with eight thousand men for a crown. Toward its own officers it manufactured outright — an order of chivalry founded the day before the coronation it was meant to dignify, a Latin motto, and a national name the King says in writing he propagated on purpose. That worked on that audience alone, because that audience was the one population the state itself had formed, from a register, at twelve.

And the order outlived its apex. The monarchy fell in 1918 and the settlement it had been built around went on for twenty-seven years, subsidised, officered and intact. Very few arrangements in this collection can be observed continuing after the removal of the figure they were nominally organised around, and the observation is worth keeping: **the apex of an order is not necessarily its load-bearing member, and the way to find out is to watch what happens when the apex is removed.**

What travelled, and what stayed behind

The reason for taking this case was that the previous study watched a state deliberately choose Prussia as a model, and that reading the original after the copy

allows one question no other pairing in the collection can ask: which of the pathologies that followed were imported with the design, and which were produced by the adopter's own materials?

What travelled is the insulation. A command authority personal to the monarch, separate from ministerial responsibility, holding officer appointment and promotion inside it, with the general staff reporting directly and the war minister — the only military officer answerable to anybody elected — left holding the money and the administration. In Prussia that was formalised in 1883 and had been operating for a decade before. In Japan the general staff was made independent in 1878, so the specific instruments were not copied in that direction and in that year; what was copied was the principle, which was visibly working when the Japanese observers were watching. And in both states it produced the same thing: a military leadership answerable to a sovereign too weak to control it and to nobody else whatever, which under the strain of a great war displaced the civil government.

What did not travel is everything that had made the design intelligible. Prussia's insulated command sat on top of a manorial countryside that supplied conscripts who could be sent home for nine months because a lord had legal power over them; a parish clergy licensed by the state that kept the rolls; a nobility whose entire position was bound into the officer corps; a two-franchise arrangement that kept the assembly which could reach the floor under a public ballot; and, underneath all of it, a poor scattered indefensible territory with no natural frontier and no defensible position, for which an army held personally and unarguably by the sovereign was a rational answer to a real problem.

An importer buys a form. He does not buy the position that made the form rational, and he does not buy the ballast.

A design exported out of the position that generated it keeps its pathologies and loses its justifications. That is the collection's central new proposition and it is what this pairing was for. It has a corollary worth stating for any case where a state is found to have adopted a foreign model: **look first for the insulation, and only then for the pathology, because the pathology is downstream — and ask which of the original's supports the importer did not also buy, because those are the parts that had been holding the dangerous component in place.**

The case for the defence

Now the counter-position, and it deserves to be put at its full strength and in its own voice, because a study that cannot state the best case against itself is not a study.

Consider what was actually there in 1640. A scatter of sandy, poor, thinly populated territories with no natural frontier and no defensible position, separated from one another by other men's land, one of them a fief held from a foreign king, all of them fought across for a generation and emptied of a third to a half of their people. Every structural consideration says such a thing should have been partitioned among Sweden, Poland, Saxony and Austria. Poland, which was larger, richer and older, was partitioned. Prussia was not.

And in becoming a state that could not be partitioned, it did the following. It made schooling compulsory in 1717, a century before anyone else, and by the nineteenth century had the most literate population in Europe. It abolished judicial torture in 1740 and codified its law. It took in Huguenots when France expelled them and twenty thousand Salzburg Protestants when the Archbishop of Salzburg drove them out, and it built a doctrine of toleration under which, in the sovereign's own words, everyone might be saved after his own fashion — at a time when much of Europe was still burning people. It built grain magazines that absorbed, in 1771 and 1772, a subsistence crisis that killed heavily in Saxony, Bohemia, Bavaria and Switzerland. It ended hereditary subjection in 1807, before Russia and before the American republic ended slavery. It created, in 1810, the research university that the entire modern world subsequently copied, and gave it academic freedom as a founding principle. It built an administration of a competence its neighbours envied and imitated, staffed by examination, in which a subject could sue the state before an administrative court and win. It unified a nation that wanted unifying, in seven years, at a cost in lives smaller than a single season of the war that came fifty years later. And it produced the first system of social insurance in the world.

Nor is the cost column as damning as it looks. The demographic catastrophe on which the state was founded was somebody else's war. The plague of 1709 was nobody's. Most of the wars this state fought were fought on its own ground against invaders. And the alternative to Prussia was never a gentler Prussia. It was no Prussia at all — which means the German lands as a permanent battlefield for France, Austria and Russia, and Poland's fate for whoever occupied the north-east.

That is a serious case and a good deal of it is true. Every factual claim in it is in this study.

The answer

The answer is not that the achievements were illusory. They were not. It is not that they are outweighed by the crimes, which is a moral accounting this method does not perform and is not competent to perform.

The answer is structural, and it has three parts.

First: the achievements and the costs are not two things. They are one apparatus, described twice.

Look at what the defence lists, and then look at what each item was riding on.

The compulsory schooling of 1717 required that the child learn the catechism by heart — a text written in 1529 which told him that whatever authority held power over him was ordained by God and owed tax, toll, fear and honour. The man who taught him was licensed by a Pietist seminary and admitted to his post by a certificate presented to the War and Domains Chamber. And the same man held the parish register, from which he entered the boy on the roll of the regiment whose canton the village lay in, at confirmation. The literacy and the conscription are the same office, the same building and the same book.

The grain magazines that absorbed the famine of 1771 were built to victual an army of eighty thousand in a country that could not feed it from the plough.

The toleration that took the Salzburgers is stated by the King himself with its operative clause attached: all religions are equal and good if the people who profess them are honest, and if Turks and heathens came and wanted *to populate the land*, we would build them mosques. The clause names the purpose. It was a recruitment instrument, and it was also entirely sincere, and this study has insisted throughout that those are not in tension.

The ending of hereditary subjection in 1807 was completed in 1811 at a price of one third of a man's arable for a hereditary tenure and one half for a non-hereditary one, and finished in 1816 by excluding the poorest cultivators from the transaction altogether and authorising their lords to buy them out. The peasant paid more to leave the arrangement than he had ever paid to stay in it.

The unification was accomplished in seven years by an army whose command had been fenced off from every mechanism of accountability precisely so that it could be used without argument — which is why it could be done in seven years, and why in 1914 there was nobody with standing to stop it.

Second: the fusion had a cause, and the cause is poverty rather than character.

This is where the answer diverges from the template, and it is the part worth carrying away.

A rich state can afford parallel institutions: a school system that is not the army's recruiting office, a granary that is not the commissariat, a census that is not a muster roll. Prussia could not. It was a poor country attempting a great power's establishment, and it could afford exactly one administration, one set of registers, one apparatus of coordination reaching into the villages. So every civil function had to ride on the military-fiscal machine, because there was nothing else to ride on. The school rode on

the parish; the parish rode on a licence; the licence was issued by the body that raised the army's money and managed the King's estates — and in 1723 those two were merged into a single office whose title states the whole matter without embarrassment: the General Superior Directory of **Finance, War and Domains**.

That yields a proposition with teeth, because it is not about Prussians. **Where a state is too poor to run parallel institutions, its civil achievements will be carried on its coercive apparatus and will be inseparable from it.** You cannot keep the schooling and discard the register, because they are the same book. You cannot keep the famine insurance and discard the magazine system, because it is the same grain. An achievement built this way is genuinely an achievement and it is genuinely not detachable, and anyone proposing to admire the one while deploring the other is proposing to divide an object that has no seam.

And the corollary, which is the answer to the defence's strongest point — that the alternative was not a gentler Prussia: **that is correct, and it is the finding rather than the refutation.** The counter-position is right that the position admitted few answers. The framework's whole claim is that positions admit few answers. What follows is not that the answer was good but that the arrangement was not an aberration to be explained by German character, Lutheran obedience or a peculiar path to modernity. It was what a poor, indefensible, scattered territory does when it declines to be partitioned, and unconnected orders in like positions have done recognisably similar things. Naming it a peculiarity is the mistake; it was a convergence.

Third: the thing that saved the order is the thing that destroyed it — and here it is the original rather than the copy.

The army held personally and unarguably by the sovereign was the answer to the position. It kept a partitionable state unpartitioned, took Silesia, survived the Seven Years' War, and made a nation. To keep it out of the reach of a chamber of deputies after the 1860s, its command was routed round the only military officer who could be questioned by anyone elected. The fence worked. It was still standing two generations later, and by then the monarch was outside it: a general staff planning without him, a military cabinet managing the officer corps without him, and no body anywhere in the constitution obliged to sit down together. In 1916 the men inside the fence were governing. In November 1918 they informed the Emperor that the army no longer stood behind him and, the following day, sold their services to his replacements on terms that preserved their autonomy.

A fence does not know who is on which side. The insulation that made the instrument usable made it, in the end, unreachable — and the finding this study can add to the one the collection already held is that the sequence ran here first, in the

original, for reasons entirely local to a position on the north German plain, and was then exported to a state that had no such position and inherited the consequence anyway.

What was actually being defended

One last thing belongs at the end of this study, because twelve modules of work converge on it and it is not what the defence — or the prosecution — usually supposes.

The arrangement was not, in the end, about the Hohenzollerns. It survived the removal of the Hohenzollerns by twenty-seven years without significant alteration: the officer corps kept its command, the bureaucracy and the judiciary continued substantially unpurged, the estates came through the revolution intact and went on drawing a grain tariff that had risen sevenfold on wheat between 1880 and 1913 and public assistance besides.

Nor was it, in the end, about Germany, which it made and then outlived by a quarter of a century.

What it was about, from the recess of 1653 to the decree of 1945, was the position of a few thousand families holding registered parcels of land east of the Elbe: their courts, their exemptions, their tolls, their sons' commissions, their neighbours' offices and, latterly, the price of their rye. Everything this study has described — the licensed pastor, the canton roll, the two franchises, the insulated command, the tariff — is intelligible as the maintenance of that, and every attempt to change it from inside failed, because every man with standing was standing on a plank that was also part of the floor.

It ended when an army arrived that owed the arrangement nothing and had a doctrine requiring the class to go — and the instrument was not a revolution, a constitution or a war. It was a threshold of one hundred hectares, aimed at exactly the marker that had defined the inside of the settlement since the seventeenth century.

Find what an arrangement's inside is attached to, and you have found both what it is for and how it will end.

What the collection now holds that it did not

Stated plainly, so the next study can attack them.

That the succession rule for wealth predicts whether a conquered order contains a capturable office; that a settlement instrument may be a prospectus rather than a claim about the past, and that its generosity measures competition for settlers; that a labour regime and the conquest whose ground it stands on are separate events with separate

causes and are routinely centuries apart; that a feudal service commuted to cash in the same generation as a salaried officer corps is created is one transaction, not two; that a settlement's boundary marker may be a thing rather than a person, and that this makes it cheap to defend and cheap to destroy; that where an apex cannot convert a population it captures the certification of its interpreters, and the diagnostic is a residence requirement in a law about appointments; that an incumbent creed with an unbound authority-variable can be inherited by a later order at no doctrinal cost; that formation is never withheld, only a cast is; that the frequency of force measures the failure of the benefit column rather than the strength of the cost column; that two extractors bidding for one body produce something the body experiences as a right, which ends when they agree; that exit which does not remit is real exit and its function is selection rather than revenue; that the terms of an arrangement's dissolution price it more honestly than the terms of its operation; that a tax privilege's geography maps the geography of the founding bargain, and that a privilege abolished in principle survives as a rate; that an order finds its extraction ceiling from its own prosecution statistics; that an unexpected domestic freedom may be an instrument for ceasing to answer to somebody else; that suppression which is not total is a funnel and the suppressor chooses the spout; that a promise made to a market is enforceable where a promise made to subjects is not; that insulation installed against a rival ends by protecting the insulated component from its owner; that a co-optation whose consideration has stopped paying may be repaired by legislated subsidy, and the distribution is the tell; that a rights catalogue should be read for what it does to combination; that a suspension list is the most candid clause in a constitution; that a general principle stated in a lost factional fight survives unattached and is picked up by whoever next finds it useful; that the width of a franchise means nothing until the competence of the body it elects is established; that a counter-revolution's timing reports on the elite and not the streets; that the ruled set the price and the hierarchy chooses what to sell, and sells the most visible and least structural thing it owns; that an insulated component with its own force does not fall with the apex but changes customers; that the coordination which creates a metabolic debt also services it, so the catastrophe comes when it stops rather than when it runs; that administrative killing is found inside a working apparatus, in the districts it did not reach; and that a design exported out of the position that generated it keeps its pathologies and loses its justifications.

Some of these will not survive the next case. That is what they are for.

A note on sources. This module introduces no new evidence. Every factual claim in it, including every claim in the case for the defence, is established in the preceding modules of this study and carries the qualifications recorded there — in particular the

ranges given for the plague and war mortalities, the flags on Frederick II's political testaments (written in French and quoted here in published English translation), the unverified provenance of the marginal note on the rock of bronze, and the acknowledged thinness of the sections on the administrative courts, the Weimar and post-1933 material, and the Polish provinces.

The comparison with the earlier study of Japan in this collection rests on that study rather than on fresh research, and the claim about what travelled with the exported design is offered as a structural reading of two cases and not as a demonstration of transmission. The precise history of what Japanese observers took, when, and from whom, requires a specialist and has not been done here; the chronological caution recorded in the module on elite coordination — that the Japanese general staff was made independent in 1878, before the Prussian orders of 1883 — stands and should be held against any stronger version of the claim.

One frame has been deliberately refused throughout. There is a large and contested historiography asking whether Prussia-Germany took a peculiar path to modernity and whether that path explains what came after. This study has not adopted that frame and has not argued against it, because it is a narrative shape rather than a mechanism, and because the convergences set out above — with a Greek city-state, with a West African emirate, with a Kenyan lineage order, with a Japanese archipelago — are evidence that what happened here was not peculiar but positional. Readers are welcome to draw a line forward from this material. The study does not draw it for them.

And a limitation to close on, stated once more because it has run through the whole study. Large parts of this order's history were lived in Polish and in Lithuanian, and this study was built almost entirely from German, Latin, French and English sources. The account of the partition provinces is absent rather than thin; the account of the Old Prussians rests on the chronicles of the people who conquered them; and a reader should assume that where those populations appear here, they appear in the field of vision of the state that governed them. That is the largest single defect in the work and it is not repaired by admitting it.